THE

# ENGLISHM

A Novel.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

BY

MISS BYRON,

AUTHOR OF THE ENGLISHWOMAN; HOURS OF AFFLUENCE AND DAYS OF INDIGENCE; MODERN VILLA AND ANCIENT CASTLE, &c. &c.

938

My affections
Are then most humble; I have no ambition
To see a goodlier man.

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938

## CHAP. I.

"Imperious dissipation whirls through life,
And hurries from the nursery to the grave,
Without one interval of thought, or time to ask—
'Who plac'd me here?' 'Why was I form'd?'
'What shall I be hereafter?"

LADY John Nugent made her appearance long before the fair lady of the mansion had viewed the thousand little elegancies and *oddities* which waited her approbation: Sir George was all ear, placing and displacing the gimcracks, as his young arbitress suggested. Lady John saluted sir Ormsby, with all that attention so flattering

...ge. Smiling at the abstrac-... married lovers, who were so busy in arranging their drawing-room, she rang the bell, and bade the servant announce lady John Nugent to sir George.

"Ah," said the lively Charlotte, as she rose to meet the delighted pair, "I see I come *next* to the boxes and vases."

"Saucy as ever," said sir George: "I have given Grace a few hints how to manage you:—but where is Nugent?"

"He will look in in the evening; he could not get off from a long-standing engagement.—I shall take my dinner with you."

"How kind!" said lady Beverly, linking her arm within that of her sister, as she took her seat on an ottoman. "I suppose," she continued, looking around her, "the ornamental decorations are very expensive? the taste is certainly good—you ordered them, George?"

The baronet bowed, and lady John, glancing her fine eyes over the features of her companion, declared—"George's taste,

in

in one instance, stood emi...
but these gewgaws, my dear girl, were forced upon his fancy, at a time when all his thoughts were given to yourself. Nugent and I were strenuous with him to leave something to be done in which you might evince your taste; we could not bring him to listen to us. The artizans conquered. I have looked in upon him, and found him in a Grecian rapture—one morning enchanted with the construction of a superior sort of lamp; on another, some mock emblem of Roman antiquity has revived his scholastic enthusiasm; and he has addressed an oration to a delf jar, truly ludicrous, unless one could have ascertained it to contain a good hoard of Roman coin."

"Never mind, my dear," said lady Beverly; "I think the *tout ensemble* excessively good. Lady John shall not laugh me out of my opinion."

"George, I wish you joy," said lady John; "this dear girl is quite manageable at

 present;

cautious—don't spoil her. ...e, ...e, my dear sir Ormsby," continued her ladyship, "do our improvements in furniture appear judicious?—it is many years since you visited the metropolis."

"Two-and-twenty ago, I remember dining in this house with your worthy father," replied sir Ormsby; "and if I am to answer your ladyship ingenuously, I think the *house* has undergone the sort of change which the *times* have. It was then the custom to have *substantial* furniture, and our friendships were of a similar kind; now all seems ornament—nothing made for use, as though the frivolous pursuits and attainments of the present race had so diminished their corporeal nature, that baby-houses were a suitable residence for them:—actually I should be afraid of moving in this very curious repository." And encouraged by the *badinage* of lady John, the baronet examined every article in the room with minute attention.

Our hero, who, in the pallid countenance

nance of his father, had appeal to his feelings, now his cousin, in order to express his fears.

Lady Beverly accounted for the alteration, by describing the severity with which the gout had attacked him.—" Make yourself easy, my dear Sid," continued the sanguine lady Beverly; " my uncle will be roused from that gloom, which was gaining upon him so fast, a short time since; even those subjects which excite his censure, will lead him to an exertion of character quite necessary to *his* health, who is *naturally* so cheerful."

" You give me comfort, Grace," said Wentworth. " We must unite to render him happy; but I know not how to give up my right to his society:—I was anticipating the pleasure of entertaining him in my little cabin."

" I must not be thwarted, Sidney; remember I am, at present, entering on my matronly reign, and I mean to begin by

rites about my person; ... court; nay, I must make you one of my ushers—consider my ignorance, Sid, and be gracious."

"I can have no wish but your pleasure, my dear girl," and he saluted the cheek of his kinswoman; "you know not how proud I am of that very ignorance you avow; I know few women worthy your friendship; lady John must assist me to form your visiting circle."

"Poh!" said lady Nugent; "why would you propose so *outré* a plan? See," and she presented a modern Court Guide, "Boyle has heard that a lady Beverly was expected, and has announced himself as ready to issue her cards, and *write* them too, if she means to be *elegantly* fashionable."

Sir Ormsby received the notifying preface from the hands of her ladyship, and smiling at its information, declared he had no doubt that the idea was suggested, in compassion to some unlettered fashion-

ables,

ables, whose sudden and vation into society made necessary.

"And perhaps a *generous* consideration for *country ladies*, whose Hottentot ignorance in all matters of elegance makes them very incompetent to conduct a *London* establishment," said lady John, smiling at her sister.

"This dear rattle is really very impertinent," replied lady Beverly; "but I value my ignorance, for Sidney prizes it, and he is my oracle."

"How ridiculous! Wentworth your oracle? my dear creature, you will be laughed at—absolutely scouted, if such an opinion gets abroad; that is, if you mean to make your *debut* with eclat. *We* consider him a Vandal—quite a bore."

Sir Ormsby looked towards her ladyship with an expression of surprise; he did not comprehend the *naïveté* of her character—at least the object of her wit appeared to *him* so perfect, that all his natural warmth of heart

son shone in his animated
enan —" How is this ?" asked the baronet.

Lady John took the arm of sir Ormsby, and leading him to the adjoining room, declared her timidity was such, she could not be *perfectly* explicit, before such a prejudiced group.

The smile which played over the brow of the gratified parent, as he resumed his seat, indicated that an eulogium, not a censure, had been passed on his Sidney.—"These happy spirits, my dear lady Nugent," said the baronet, "are the handsomest tributes to wedded love; just so would I wish a daughter of mine to act—cheerful, where her mirth is properly appreciated, and dignified, where her example is expected to influence."

Sidney, whose ideas were not always in unison with his father's, gave a gallant assent to the compliment by a bow; but we fear to add, even the innocency of her mirth, or its flattering purport, as applied

to

to himself, would not have reconciled *him* to unite in wishing *his* wife to possess a similar disposition. Lady John, as before stated, was a woman whom Wentworth esteemed; he respected her for the good qualities she really possessed; yet wit, in the eyes of our Englishman, was a dangerous talent;—"Its merit," thought Sidney, "consists in its brilliancy; a woman who is eminent for repartee, must necessarily be conspicuous;" and though her ladyship timed her sallies with more judgment than is usual with the light-hearted, it was an excellence *he* could not prize.

"Those features of yours, Wentworth, are impertinently honest," said lady John; "I read your thoughts—you are a ridiculous animal; and at this moment, I could vouch your *sentimental* theory is taking an active range; or has it not pointed faithfully to *one* dear object, the fair dependant?"

"Ha! tell me, my dear madam, is he really attached? I am truly anxious to see

my son settled. A single man, my dear lady John, is an ungracious animal—the first wish of my heart is to see my Sidney married."

"He *was* in love a few days since," resumed her ladyship; "yet I know not that you would sanction his choice—the lady has no fortune, and I believe fills a very inadequate rank in society."

"Spare me, I beseech you," said our hero; "you are colouring a simple assertion in language to which it does not amount; I spoke approvingly, and you have translated it into actual preference. You must give me time and observation, sir," turning to his father; "a bachelor must bear the raillery of the ladies; I am equal to that, while I retain my own approbation."

"Offended, 'pon honour," said lady John. "George, I am truly glad *you* have thrown off the testy armour—do pray contrive to make this creature vulnerable."

Sir George, who had been engaged in

reading a few letters of congratulation, avowed himself ready to attempt the task; —"Yet I believe, Charlotte, that marriage, to be happy, must be a voluntary dedication—I am sure of it," and he glanced towards his blushing wife.

"It is beyond a doubt," said Wentworth; "and until I am influenced to the change by motives as forcible as pure, I will willingly submit to be laughed t, and think myself honourable from my firmness."

"I am most sincerely rejoiced Nugent does not dine with us," said lady John; "he would take up the gauntlet for our systematic bachelor, and I should be foiled, or, what is worse, be compelled to yield my opinion."

"I will treasure your sarcasms," replied Sidney, "and put my defence in the hands of lord John;" and taking the hand of lady Beverly, he led her to the dining-room. "Thank Heaven I did not ask lady John's patronage for my fair friend,"

 thought

thought our hero, as he placed himself at the dinner-table; "she would have met my wishes with generous urbanity, and have been kind and attentive to the forlorn girl, no doubt; yet could she restrain her *badinage,* would she have been able to forego her love of teazing, and spared her *protegée?* I fear not; no, this retired woman —my unobtrusive Grace, she is the sort of character to whom appeals of sympathy might with safety be addressed;" and, like a true-born Englishman, the tie which nature and early friendship had woven round his heart, appeared, at this moment, to bind him more strongly to his kindred.

Sir Ormsby, who thought the allusion of lady John must have some foundation, reverted to the subject in idea: there was nothing very objectionable in a woman's wanting money, though her possessing it was an advantage desirable, and what *his* son might expect: but he could not so readily reconcile her want of rank; he knew many families who desired his alliance, and lord

lord Arlingham, who was a college chum of the baronet's, had recently made proposals of the most flattering sort—no less than the hand of his daughter; it was this circumstance which had decided his present journey to the metropolis, conscious that Sidney was more likely to fall into his views, if he was not pressed upon the subject. Sir Ormsby had fully determined to be silent with regard to lord Arlingham's overture; and though Wentworth had, in a manner, refuted the charge of his fair tormentor, there was a confusion and vexation in his countenance, which rather indicated an interest he was unwilling to disclose.

The arrival of lord John, late in the evening, called the attention of sir Ormsby to other subjects. His lordship was pleased with his new relation. As Miss Wentworth, his acquaintance was slight; he had seen her at Layton Hall, when a girl—now she was a mild polished woman; the graceful timidity with which she received his

his congratulations was highly interesting in his eyes, who prized in woman, woman's most attractive charm, MODESTY.

"I have just parted from lord Osterly," said the peer, "at least I left him at the feet of a young lady, to whom he was enacting Romeo; I conclude he has forgotten his Adderfield Juliet."

"Osterly in town?" said Wentworth; "I thought he was at Brighton."

"He said something of a matter of importance calling him to London; but I believe lady Tadcaster's ball is the magnet of attraction."

"It is probable enough—he is always on the wing:—his *friend* was with him, I suppose?"

"He was, and in high eloquence. I must take his part to-night," continued lord John, "for really I never saw a man more noticed; in fact, he appeared to me to be considered quite an oracle."

"If Mr. Supple is the gentleman to whom

whom you allude, my lord," replied lady Beverly, "I can scarcely wonder at it; he is very specious; it requires to see him often, to be aware of his character."

"My dear Grace, I must contradict you," said lady John; "I saw the hypocrite in his profound bow, and his palpable flattery is disgusting. *Entre nous,* he was in high favour at the Hall: Fanny seemed unusually interested by his sentimental gabble; and lord Osterly met most lenient countenance from all of ye—how was this?"

"Really I cannot explain how it happened. Beverly thinks lord Osterly has some good traits in his character; he considers him a harmless rattle, and Mr. Supple, though odd, well meaning. I suppose Fanny took up her opinion of these *socios* from her brother. It is certain neither Louisa or I could consider them in so favourable a point of view. Supple deceived me for a day or two; after that, I presumed to judge for myself, and I believe

lieve we now stand on equal ground; he will never again affect sentiment with me. Fanny calls me malicious, but I am not to be converted."

"You are right, Grace; there cannot be a more injudicious companion for a young woman, than that same hypocrite," said Wentworth. "I will undertake to convert Beverly, who, as yet, knows only the surface of this insatiate gulf of refined immorality."

"Malice prepense," said sir George, laughing; "he has won your mistress, or defeated some of your methodical projects, Wentworth; but I will hear your arguments."

"You shall," said our hero, "in a proper place; "though I disown the imputation of thinking or pursuing an object in which *he* could interfere;" and the succeeding thought, if avowed, must have proved his assertion inaccurate; for Supple, beyond a doubt, watched the fair creature who clung to the heart of our Englishman.

As

As Wentworth pursued his way home, the raillery of lady John recurred to his mind; it was self-evident he must have betrayed his feelings, when speaking of Miss Sidney, or her ladyship could not have attacked him so openly; and while he mentally disapproved her gaiety on the subject, his candour obliged him to allow that her motive might be amiable; the peculiarities of his father's character were known to her—might she not imagine, that, in broaching the subject, she was preparing the mind of sir Ormsby for a fact which must necessarily reach his ear soon, and possibly, by her explanation, prevent any of those castle-building flights in which the baronet was apt to indulge? "Perhaps so," said Sidney; "yet I wish the women would allow me to think for myself.—Absurd vanity!" sighed the self-arraigned bachelor; "I am giving myself a most prominent station in the remembrance of women; and the only creature whose favour I wish to win, though portionless and dependant,

dependant, sees me with indifference—nay more, she repulsed me, when, Heaven knows, I meant only to do her honour;" and he revised the simple and unintentional reproof of our heroine, when defending Henry Carberry at Mr. Hopkins's.

To the surprise of Wentworth, Philip was still absent; his own inconvenience was of little consequence, compared with his real concern for his faithful servant. Hall, to whom he imparted his fears, looked wise, and full of insinuations. Sidney saw his malice, and frustrated his purpose, by wholly rejecting every supposition he asserted.—"If I do not hear of him to-morrow," said he, looking on his mortified attendant, "I shall certainly fear some accident has befallen him; at all events, if you know any of his connexions, seek them out, and learn if they know what detains him."

"I know none of his friends, sir; he is very close."

"He is right," resumed Wentworth, as he

he dismissed the insidious enemy; and here we will leave the hero of our tale, and return to the orphan Amelia.

Lady Tadcaster's family establishment was, in every department, highly fashionable. Her ladyship was always engaged either in receiving or making visits; her morning commenced at one o'clock; if she took an airing, she returned at six to dress for dinner; her own dinner-hour was nearer eight than seven, consequently *her* parties assembled at midnight. Amelia and her charge lived in a sort of scrambling style; the servants, fatigued by their irregular life, were glad to avoid all additional attendance: thus the meals of the governess and her pupils were served at various hours—always ill dressed, and frequently with a disregard to its quality.

The ladies Maria and Charlotte were by no means indifferent to this neglect; and in expressing their disapprobation, their dispositions stood confessed. Lady Charlotte

lotte was sure, if her papa knew how they lived, he would give her aunt a good rowing:—"Pray don't you think seven hundred a-year is quite enough for our board and clothing?" said she, addressing Amelia.

"I cannot possibly judge," said Amelia; "your ladyship's dress is very expensive; and an establishment like lady Tadcaster's cannot be supported but by a great expenditure."

"Poh! she has five hundred a-year for our masters besides," resumed lady Charlotte; "so I think we ought to have every thing we want."

"Dear Charlotte," interrupted her sister, "how can you speak so harshly of my aunt? you know she has been unfortunate lately; and has she not been fitting up the cottage to please you? I am sure papa would not like to hear you use such terms when speaking of his sister."

"But he cannot hear me, Maria; and knowing this, I have written to him, and

entreated

entreated him to come home: those nasty Indian voyages!—my letter will be three or four months going, and I shall be nearly a year older before I get an answer; how provoking! I had hoped to be married before that."

"Married!" said lady Maria and our heroine, in a breath.

"Yes, married!" echoed lady Charlotte. "La! don't look like such quizzes—I mean what I say."

"Your sister is jesting," said Amelia, turning to lady Maria; "she is quizzing us, I think."

"Not I, indeed—I am serious. Weybridge told me, the other day, it was quite a farce to keep us up so; all girls of our age are OUT. You know, Maria, you will be seventeen next month, and I am only ten months younger; and if that is not old enough to make one's *debut*, I wonder."

"I certainly did not understand your ages to be such," said Amelia; "but is it not a fashionable error, to fix a period for introducing

introducing young ladies in a manner so prominent? Marriage is a very uncommon topic for a person in my situation to discuss, nor am I qualified, by my knowledge of the world, to offer advice; yet really I must think it would be happier for females if they were not introduced so early—nay, I would say they should glide into society, not marked and set forward for notice; in that case, they would be sought, in place of attracting."

"What an old-fashioned creature you are!" said lady Charlotte; "you know nothing of fashionable life; why how could the men guess we were SPECS, if it was not announced?"

"SPECS!" said Amelia; "I do not comprehend you."

"That's excellent!" said the fashionable adept. "Spec means a girl of fortune—a good *speculation*; it is a term used in the best society."

"Indeed!" replied the uninformed governess; "it is an odd, and by no means

a flattering

a flattering distinction: but if your ladyship will take your music lesson, I am ready to attend you."

"I understand you, Miss Sidney; you do not downright say—'You are wrong, lady Charlotte,' but in a sly way, want to lead me from the su' ject."

"To convince your ladyship of my sincerity, I candidly avow you have discerned my motives; and, in future, I shall feel obliged by your not resuming a subject which is not suited to your age, nor in the least connected with my duties in lady Tadcaster's family."

"Now that is so like a cross old maid, I must laugh at you.—Do, Maria, sing—'Nobody coming to marry me;' it would just suit this *old* lady."

"Really, Charlotte, you are quite ridiculous," said lady Maria; "you know aunt Tadcaster does not like us to talk of our age, and Miss Sidney is very right—she wishes to make you reasonable, if she can. Come, let us go to the music;" and

leading

leading the way, they passed an hour in playing some of the most beautiful compositions now in use.

Music, dancing, Italian, French, and fancy ornaments, occupied so much of the day, that our heroine, whose sober mind was imperiously swayed by considerations of a more SOLID nature, ventured to suggest that these superficial acquirements should be intersected by lessons calculated to store the mind with ideas of our rational superiority, not less than our human dependance. Lady Maria, whose docile disposition naturally led her to obedience, would have fallen into the happy path, had not her sister ridiculed the plan as methodistical, requesting Miss Sidney to propose her system to lady Tadcaster, who was the directress of their *studies*.

"*Studies!*" thought Amelia; "what a term for all I have hitherto witnessed in this house! an ideot might go through the routine, and gain applause. How happy was my lot!—friendless, unconnected, and,

as

as I learn, *rejected* where I had a claim, how happy to have fallen to the care of an intellectual woman! Adversity has not rendered me hopeless, though it has depressed my natural character. These poor girls," and she looked, with an expression of *compassion,* upon her elevated associates, " if the world frowned on them, where is their refuge? not in exertion—they are taught to consider it degrading: would their *equals* countenance them? where is the precedent for a hope so consoling? Alas, then, who shall say education is not the *basis* of sublunary happiness? and if 'each moment of time is a monument of God's goodness,' who would build with *shreds,* who possessed the power of laying a foundation which shall stand the test of time—nay, more, secure for us an *eternal* habitation?"

The importance of her situation so wholly engaged the mind of our young preceptress, that, regardless of the sneers of lady Charlotte, she sought an opportu-

nity of naming *her* plan to lady Tadcaster. Her ladyship listened with a mixture of impatience and attention.

"You are very right, Miss Sidney," said she; "that is, as a tutoress, your *theory* is consistent; but, my dear madam, its *practice*, in a *certain* rank, is impracticable; serious pursuits cannot be expected to engage the young and independent. I would not have the charming spirits of my nieces depressed for the world. No; sober reflection will come on with years;—they will learn to *think* when the hey-day of youth is past. All I require of you is, to *see* they attend to their masters; observe their *carriage*, and endeavour to prevent their attracting the attention of the other sex, without I give you my authority for their doing so." Amelia looked her surprise. "Your youth, Miss Sidney, and the previous habits of your life," resumed her ladyship, "has made you a stranger to the observances *we* sanction and approve. Now we are alone, I will explain to you

my

my plan. Your pupils might, with *propriety*, be introduced: I wish to defer it for a season—in fact, there is no chance for them *just* now, there have been so many *brought out* lately; insomuch, that some country friends of my own, who had been at immense expence in fitting their daughters for *society*, have been induced to hurry back, and seclude them for another year. Conceive how provoking such a disappointment must be! To avoid this, I have made up my mind to represent them as younger than they are, to *indiscriminate* acquaintance: but should an advantageous match, that is, if a man worth attracting should come in the way, *we* can manage to bring one of them forward, as *we* see he is disposed. I rely upon your assistance in a matter so important, but request the girls may not be made acquainted with our intention."

"I am convinced your ladyship will not find me equal to an undertaking of this kind," said Amelia, an honest blush crim-

soning her cheek as she spoke. "In venturing to differ from your ladyship, I may hazard your displeasure, yet I cannot refrain from observing, that I could not undertake a charge in which I did not hope to feel an interest *distinct* from my duties. The happiness of your ladyship's nieces, if I remain with them, must claim that interest. You will forgive me, madam, when I add, I could not undertake to instruct them in a line of conduct, which, I fear, would lead to any thing than happiness."

"I am the best judge in this case," interrupted lady Tadcaster, haughtily; "it is my pleasure they should be obedient. Your notions might suit the middle rank of life, where CONNEXION is of no importance. You mean well, no doubt, child, but there is much to be considered, in establishing women of rank; they must take their chance for happiness—marriage is a lottery, at the best—I trust *they* will get prizes. Should they disappoint my hopes,

hopes, they will find hundreds in a similar predicament."

Amelia, disgusted by the hardihood of a mind so wilfully inattentive to propriety, and considering her ladyship's purpose fixed, was retiring, when lady Tadcaster, with an ironical smile, detained her.— "You will be silent with regard to our conference, Miss Sidney; impress your pupils with the idea that timidity is becoming; and, as I perceive you are a novice in management, I will take the whole weight of the arrangement upon my own hands. I have a very good opinion of you," she continued; "you are only a little too demure. I should not like you less, if I saw you lively and animated, as women of your age usually are."

"My disposition is naturally cheerful, madam," said Amelia; "but I believe it is not possible to carry a smiling face when the mind is depressed," and the tears stood in her eyes.

"Good Heavens!" said lady Tadcaster,

"I did not mean to distress you, child; you are very unexceptionable—perfectly so; I am quite satisfied with you. Pray don't let my nieces perceive you are uneasy—it may affect *their* spirits."

Our heroine withdrew, not so well convinced of her ladyship's *sympathy* as her *self-love*, which led her to fear the *effect* of sorrow rather than its *cause*. This is a trait of *self-love*—of a miser's self-love; not a particle of *social* feeling mixed in the narrow-minded consideration.

How gracious to the often-wounded spirit of Amelia were the occasional billets addressed to her by lady Morbury, whose zealous interest in her fate, uniting with the wishes of lady Anna, made her attentively kind to our dependant. Mrs. Marnley's extenuating apology was received by our heroine as it deserved; it was more than she expected, though strictly her due. She replied to it with politeness, yet with a dignity of mind which did not place the concession in too exalted a point of view.

From

From Carberry she got a few lines, announcing the safe arrival of Durweston and his aunt at her new residence. These conciliating occurrences tended to render her more easy in herself; yet it seemed highly probable her present asylum would prove a transient shelter, not less with regard to her younger pupil, but the very prominent and ridiculous manner of lord Weybridge, who, as a distant connexion of lady Tadcaster's, was continually loitering about the house, addressing her with a freedom highly insolent. Lady Charlotte romped with his lordship, and quizzed her governess with a *sang froid* which gave the peer frequent opportunities of converting her wit into the most hyperbolical compliments.

Lady Maria receded from his bold manner, and by taking part with Amelia, encreased the raillery of the leagued wits; yet it was evident lord Weybridge did violence to his judgment in ridiculing lady Maria, whom he often, in a half-whisper to our

 heroine,

heroine, declared to be "a sweet natural little girl." Amelia did justice to her favourite upon all occasions; and sincerely did she regret that a mind so tractable had not fallen under better guidance than that of lady Tadcaster.

It was in returning from a long walk on the Fulham road, that lord Weybridge's equipage overtook the governess and her pupils; the weather was warm, and a light shower was falling. Lady Charlotte hailed the barouche; his lordship gladly alighted, giving the reins to his servant, well pleased to compel Amelia to take a seat in his carriage. It was impossible to decline it; lady Charlotte avowed her determination—she could not leave her—thus my lord had the pleasure of staring her out of countenance—a satisfaction he always appeared to enjoy. Yet, to do justice to this sprig of nobility, he was not *uniform* in his manner—that is, his language did not always assimilate with his *plebeian* association. At one time he addressed her as his

equal;

*equal*; at another, with an insolent tone of presumption, perhaps; for there is a way of applying *words* to *persons*, as well as "actions to words." He considered her *professionally*, when he used the *imperative mood*, and wished to ascertain her grammatical accuracy. Whatever might be *his* motives on these occasions, it is certain he never gained from the insulted dependant an answer that could flatter his consequence.

"Why do you wear that veil?" asked lord Weybridge of Amelia, at the same time hooking the lace shade with the parasol of lady Charlotte.

"I like it," said Amelia.

"Humph!" replied my lord, "you are laconic."

Amelia was silent. At this moment sir Charles Felton and captain Lennard passed on horseback; the former, recognising our heroine, bowed distantly, and rode on.

"What makes you blush so confoundedly?"

edly?" resumed the peer; "is it the honour of the thing?"

"I deem it no honour to meet *politeness* from any man, let his rank be what it may," said Amelia, bowing significantly to his lordship.

"I like your spirit; there was more meaning in that movement than I expected.—Well, madam, *may* I ask you how long you have known sir Charles Felton?"

"About two months, my lord."

"Oh, I forgot; you know the Arlinghams. Have you heard that Wentworth and lady Anna are to be married?"

"Indeed!" said Amelia, with an air of surprise she could not conceal.

"It is talked of," continued my lord; "but, what the devil! do you blush for all the men? why you are an arrant flirt!"

"I am not surprised, however I may be *offended* by your remark, my lord," said our heroine, proudly; "you seem to think my *present* situation a licence for insult; I am obligated to *hear* you, but it is

possible

possible your sentiments are never less valued than when addressed to one who is indifferent to your opinion."

"Sulky, upon honour! you will come too by and bye."

"La! is lady Anna going to marry Mr. Wentworth?" asked lady Charlotte; "he is very rich and very handsome. Aunt says he is the handsomest man in London;—is it quite true?"

"He's a horrid bore," said my lord; "I don't know what the women see in him; they have raised his vanity to such a pitch, I hate the sight of him."

"Oh! now you have said why you dislike him—you are jealous, my lord," said lady Charlotte.

"How dare you utter such a libel? I jealous! by Heavens, I think him hideous! nor do I believe lady Anna is such a tame ideot, to sit down for life with such a sentimental quiz."

Whether Amelia thought her ladyship's decision what his lordship stated it, we will

not pretend to say; certain it is, the intelligence, though from so frivolous a quarter, engaged her thoughts during the rest of her ride.

After playing a most interesting game at "the devil" with lady Charlotte, lord Weybridge recollected he had promised to take a lesson from *Molineaux* that morning. "The sable chief will be waiting—adieu! good bye, Maria!—come, shake a paw," said my lord, extending his hand to our heroine.

Amelia held back from the saucy freedom:—"So you wont forgive me?—upon my soul, dignity becomes you! but I will not go till we are friends;" and seizing the hand of our heroine, he pressed it to his lips, nor would relinquish it till she said he was forgiven.

"Yes, yes, you are; go, my lord—this boldness is cruel;" and wresting her hand from his grasp, she sought refuge in the adjoining room.

"Any thing but cruel, thou silly girl," said my lord, running down the stairs.

"What

"What a fuss you make!" said lady Charlotte; "really I think lord Weybridge has less *pride* than any man I know."

"Miss Sidney is quite right," said lady Maria; "it is insolent in my lord to use such freedom with an almost stranger."

"Your ladyship seems to consider insult a condescension," said Amelia, addressing lady Charlotte; "I must beg to set you right. Familiarity with men, in *any* rank, is indecorous. Had lord Weybridge presumed to address you in the same way, in my presence, I should have interfered, because my situation gives me a right to do so. In using such freedom with me, he betrays a very inferior mind, by convincing me he judges me by my situation, not by my principles."

"Do you ever expect to get married?" asked the bold hoyden, with a laugh.

"I know not how to answer your ladyship. If I do entertain such an idea, I believe it is not by suffering indignities I should

should attain the protection of a man of honour."

"A man of honour!" repeated lady Charlotte; "well, that is as old-lady-like a speech as I ever heard;—how my aunt would laugh at you!"

"I think not," said Amelia. "If I understand lady Tadcaster, she dislikes forwardness of manner—at least, she begged me to inculcate that timidity was becoming the age of her nieces; and as timidity is but another name for modesty, where it is natural, a simple remark, which, I trust, is founded upon this feeling, would not excite her mirth."

"You are so unanswerably correct, I shall be quite afraid of you soon:—so I am to blush, and *appear* angry, whether I really am so or no?"

"I am the last person who would recommend an *artificial* character; nor in these points will deception avail; if *innate* delicacy does not suggest what is proper, we cannot

cannot repulse the froward, nor wear more than the transient notice of the men, who are always accurate in discovering the real characters of women, and usually deride the foibles they are active in making conspicuous."

Lady Charlotte made a low curtsey, and, declaring she had had lecturing enough for that morning, withdrew.

"I wish you had been with us the last two years," said lady Maria; "I am sure we should have been much happier."

"I am flattered by your good opinion; but, my dear lady Maria, I much doubt if your sister is so well disposed towards me. Your kindness demands my candour. I consider your mind infinitely more feminine than lady Charlotte's—forgive me if I add, your ideas are infantine. I do not mean to depreciate your understanding; in the present instance it is a compliment—you are more innocent. You possess delicacy; this is not enough, though an excellent *foundation* for improving—shall we

unite

unite to raise a little structure distinct from mere *superficial* attainments? I do not profess much, but would willingly impart what little knowledge I possess, where I hoped it would prove beneficial—shall we begin a course of reading? it can be done with ease; nor will I ask you to continue it, if, after a fair trial, you should find my system at variance with your principles."

Lady Maria embraced Amelia with tears. "We will, my dear Miss Sidney. Indeed I love you!—I did from the first moment I saw you; and now I see you every day, and know how amiable you are, I wish to be like you. I am sure a solid education must be the happiest, for it enables you, who are so young, to give comfort to me. Indeed I am not happy. I know papa will be so disappointed if he comes home—he has always said so much in all his letters about morality, and duties, and female delicacy."

"As far as my poor abilities extend, we will

will endeavour to meet the wishes of the general," said Amelia. "Indeed he is right, my dear; such qualities are inestimable;—youth and beauty are such transient possessions, we cannot too sedulously cultivate those charms of mind which shall bind us to our friends, and place these fleeting gifts in their just and inferior point of view."

This amiable conference laid the groundwork of the fair pupil's happiness; her zeal was proportioned to the deficiencies her expanding intellects daily unfolded; and had not fate destined our heroine——but I am anticipating; suffice it to say, lady Charlotte amused herself with the idea of her sister's going back to her hornbook, as she called it; at another time, she was certain lady Maria would be a prodigy—she should not wonder if she became a classical scholar.

These taunts lost their point with the indefatigable lady Maria, whose ductile mind and gentle disposition was not to be roused to resentment, nor turned from pur-

suits

suits which her reason approved. Even lady Tadcaster, at times, joined the trifling Charlotte, and rallied the "young moralist." But to the surprise and discomfort of our heroine, her ladyship one morning required her presence in her boudoir.

"My dear Miss Sidney," said her ladyship, "I am quite pleased with your course of studies, as applied to lady Maria—they suit her turn of mind, and I trust to her gaining an establishment highly advantageous; in fact, I have, in my own mind, fixed upon the man; I know not if he *really* acts up to all I hear said of him; we must take the good with the bad in these cases; but if, in my absence, a gentleman of the name of Wentworth should be announced, let the girls be seen, and, if possible, contrive to draw *your* pupil into conversation: I am mistaken if *she* is not exactly the girl he would like."

Amelia scarcely respired—"Was *she* to endeavour to entangle Mr. Wentworth into marriage? to teach a young woman (perhaps

indifferent

indifferent to his many graces of mind) to play the hypocrite, and, worse, forego her own chief worth—modesty?" Looking calmly at the speculative dictator, she replied—" That, should lady Maria meet the gentleman in questión, she had no doubt of her ladyship's appearing what she really was—amiable; but that to instruct her for a meeting of the kind was incompatible with her ideas of propriety; nor could she *promise* to draw her ladyship's talents into action."

" You are the most fastidious little animal in existence," said lady Tadcaster; "quite inconvertible; yet I know you mean well. Don't look so grave, child; I am satisfied with you."

The feeling was not mutual; Amelia retired, more than ever disgusted with the office to which she was appointed. Firmly resolved not to give her aid to a project so unprincipled, she yet hoped she should not be doomed to meet our hero under her present complex character; and she recurred,

red, in idea, to those attentions *she* had received from Wentworth;—they were flattering, because they were the kindnesses of a superior man; "but it is probable they took rise in compassion," whispered pride; "compassion is another name for pity, and pity is akin to——where am I straying?" sighed the awakening illusionist; "this is infatuation, equal, almost, to the fantasies of my employer."

It was with a mixture of pleasure and chagrin our dependant learned one morning that Wentworth had passed an hour with lady Tadcaster and lady Charlotte, during her airing with her pupil. Had she been at home, she might, perchance, have caught the sound of his voice, or seen him distantly; "and this," thought the unconsciously entangled dependant, "this would have been a satisfaction. I would fly his actual presence; but, in a house so destitute of intellectual visitors, there would be pleasure in recognising known worth;" and she blushed at the high value she had attached

to

to casualties so transient as those she believed she had lost by being absent: again, had he seen her, and retained that *hauteur* which marked his parting bow at Mr Hopkins's.—"I should have betrayed my folly —my vanity rather," said the half-candid girl; "I could not have borne it. When animated by kindness—beaming with generous consideration for an insulted woman, surely never eyes expressed such meaning as Wentworth's; but that distant look— was it pride? I know not why he assumed such an expression;—assuredly I felt his scorn. I wish I could forget it."

From a reverie ill calculated to subdue a youthful preference, our heroine was aroused by the entrance of lady Charlotte. "Maria, we have had the handsome Wentworth with us; really he is a very charming man: you were out of luck this morning; aunt tried to detain him till you came home, but he could not stay. Never mind, my dear—don't pout; he will be at

aunt's ball, and so you will see him in two days, you know."

"I can wait very patiently," said lady Maria; "but is it quite so certain *we* shall go down stairs on the ball night?"

"Go! *certainement*. Why I think we have a sort of right, Maria; who pays the piper?"

"Fie, Charlotte! if the general heard you?"

"Poh! that is so Sidneyish; no more of it. I am longing till the day arrives. Prosing old Morbury and lady Anna are to be here; I shall try and discover if this Wentworth is her lover: and aunt says she expects sir George and lady Beverly; you remember him—he *used* to be a good-natured creature, if she has not spoiled him."

Amelia, who had wholly resigned all hope of making the voluble hoyden tractable, was silent during her ladyship's harangue. She knew not that *she* should mix in the festive scene, nor could she wish to

do

do so, though, to meet lady Morbury and her niece would be a high gratification.

At length the so-anxiously-expected day arrived. The bustle attendant on *extraordinary elegance* was sensibly felt throughout the house. From a most interesting conference which lady Tadcaster was holding with artizans of various descriptions, her ladyship was summoned to receive a visitor: she obeyed with reluctance, not unmarked by language which expressed the irritability of her temper. Smiles succeeded the hurricane, when she met a gentleman, the friend of her brother the general; he brought letters from general Dalton, and, more, intimated that some Indian packages waited only the customary ordeal before delivery. This was food for her vanity, and might, upon *occasion*, be *melted* into provision for her purse. Her visitor expressed a wish to *see* the daughters of his friend: lady Tadcaster excused their immediate appearance—they were out, but the colonel would honour her by his com-

pany

pany in the evening—she was sensible the invitation was late—she trusted to his overlooking form, in a case so irremediable. The gentleman assented: he had promised to join a friend in a short excursion to Cheltenham, and should leave London the next day, consequently there was no alternative, if he wished to see the ladies Dalton.

This point settled, the gentleman took leave; and her ladyship, referring to the packet, had time to remove the India bills enclosed. Their arrival was most seasonable; she could now go on through the season with eclat. The letters addressed specially to her nieces, she determined to withhold till after the ball—the general was apt to express himself gravely, and lady Maria's spirits might be affected by the perusal. For herself, the many kind thanks or tender injunctions which graced his address to her, were passed over: the *substantial* worth was every thing; and kissing the golden prize, she imputed to fortune what was due to brotherly liberality.

Her ladyship returned to the waiting tradespeople, in spirits so elevated, that the leader of the band (whose knowledge of a *certain rank* of fashionables made him no incompetent judge of causes) immediately began to decry several articles he had *before* declared would do for the occasion. "Upon reflection, my lady," said the wary speculator, "I think it would be adviseable to make a few alterations in our plan. Your ladyship's taste has hitherto been unrivalled, consequently you would not lose your pre-eminence for the sake of a few pounds. I fitted up a very *nouvelle* marquee for the countess of Berkshire—it had a very elegant effect: I need not add, that the countess's guests are of the *most* exalted class, and eminent for their taste."

"I should like something quite new," said her ladyship; "no *imitation* would do. What shall it be? Temples, bowers, booths, all these have been seen. Can you invent nothing out of the common way?"

"Give me five minutes, my lady." The

 artist

artist paced the room, intent on planning some specious depredation upon the purse of his employer. "I have it, my lady! Your ladyship's connexions being mostly Indian, suppose we were to introduce an Indian cottage, or a pagoda?"

"In point of compliment, these would suit my friends; but then the Asiatic languages—I must have every thing unique: no, that will not do. What if we had a rustic dairy, from which the refreshments might be served?"

"Admirable! nothing can exceed your ladyship's taste. I will instantly set about it. The female domestics can easily be put into proper costume, and a few of the men habited as peasants."

"Set about it instantly," resumed her ladyship; "I leave it all to your management: there is something refreshing in the idea. I can improve upon it," she continued, after a pause; "yes, I will find a little *Cowslip* for the rural dwelling. Go, get all the workmen in London—never mind

expence;

expence; I am delighted with your ingenuity;" and hastening to the school-room of the ladies Dalton, she proposed to lady Maria that she should, occasionally, take possession of the dairy. "I anticipate the most interesting consequences from my dear little *Cowslip's* simplicity of character: you will oblige me, my love;" for she saw, in the countenance of her niece, a disposition to oppose the plan.

"I cannot, indeed, my dear aunt; I am sorry to refuse, but I would sooner be debarred the pleasure of dancing, or appearing at the ball, than promise what I could not perform."

"Ridiculous girl! you must be present. I have to introduce you to a friend of the general's, a nabob, one who has lately seen your father, and has brought us all some Indian presents—come, you will be a good child; remember, I exceed my first intention, in letting you mix in society; but I have prepared my friends to consider it as granted to your childish solicitations; so

 nothing

nothing could be more appropriate than your appearing as a simple novice—a blushing rustic; my Maria never looks so handsome, as when her pretty face is flushed by the compliments she must ever meet, where her person is seen to advantage."

The insidious poison failed to effect her ladyship's purpose. Turning in anger from the steady girl, she addressed lady Charlotte—" Your vivacity would lead you out of all bounds, my dear Charlotte. I have the highest opinion of your wit, and your animation would be infinitely more attractive than the sober correctness of Maria; but I had set my heart on the urchin's obedience;—in fact, it would have answered a purpose on which much depends."

" Has papa's friend brought no letters for us?" asked lady Maria.

" Yes, he has; at least I believe so. I have not time to talk of domestic matters to-day; you shall know all to-morrow."

" Tell me what I am to do," said lady Charlotte,

Charlotte, "and I will endeavour to sustain the character."

"Follow me," said lady Tadcaster; "we will talk the subject over. Miss Sidney," she continued, "you will come down in the evening." Amelia was declining the half cordial and *late* invitation. "You must come," resumed the dictating hostess; "it is necessary you should be present to look after your charge. If I should not see you till evening, be sure and attend to what I suggested on a former occasion.—Nay, I think it would be as well if you took the whole weight of their introduction upon yourself; represent that you *entreated* they might be present this evening, and that I yielded, this once, to your request. I have not time for argument; do as I direct;" for she saw our heroine was on the point of disclaiming the office.

"I certainly cannot obey lady Tadcaster," said Amelia. "To be present, as her ladyship has nominated it a part of my duty, admits no alternative; but I will not adopt a

system of deception to accommodate any person."

"Never mind, my dear Miss Sidney," said lady Maria, "my aunt will be so engaged she will forget us; nor can I think *we* shall be liable to all the notice she expects; I am sure I hope not; I will contrive to be with you as much as I can, and make you as comfortable as possible."

"You are very good; it is a countenance I shall, most probably, need. If your ladyship will occasionally seek me, and chat a little, it will be a great relief;—I know what I have to expect." And retiring to her room, the anticipating dependant gave loose to her tears.

To mix in a party of TOTAL strangers would have been preferable to meeting individuals who might or might not chuse to recognise her. She had been seen at Mrs. Marnley's, and many of her visitors would probably attend lady Tadcaster's ball. If politeness did not dictate their conduct, *memory* might make them accurate to re-

collect

collect that a mystery attached to her removal from that residence; and here her continued assumption, or rather her use of a second, in place of her real sirname, seemed to sanction any slight she might experience. To enter into explanations with lady Tadcaster was impossible; her ladyship never *listened* to any than her associates; and, in fact, Amelia *felt* her residence in Grosvenor-place would be short; therefore, to give her motives for the concealment she had been enjoined to observe, seemed quite superfluous.

It appears wrong to exhibit a woman in the situation of our heroine as *expecting* to be recognised by her superiors. We must take a view of the specific qualities which attract the notice of the fashionable world generally. First then, *money*.—If a woman owns this charm, she is an angel of light in the eyes of thousands. If she is highly *connected*, observe the little levee she attracts—younger brothers, counsellors, army, navy; next to prime minister, there

there cannot be a creature more in request; from a cadet to a general, she can command her slaves. Then comes personal beauty :—if supported by money, she has scarcely *time* to make her election; she is whirled into a buck's barouche, and, in due time, may *walk* off, with *any* man, at the trifling expence of a lawsuit; and a Lethean balm, under the sanction of a new *name*, gives her to society as the loveliest and most innocent of women; excuseable for all that's *past*, for she has power to *promise* to *her* equals, that all to *come* shall be calculated to insure *their* countenance. *Short sight* is a concomitant on *fashion;* then shall we wonder that such look not beyond *this* sphere? to them what is the future? No *summons* has been issued for *their* attendance *specially*—no day *announced*, in which the assembled myriads are to be classed, and receive their *appointed* admissions—why should they look to a *meeting* so unmarked by *usual* forms?

Because it is unmarked! the very reasons

sons which are your subterfuges are your crimes—your blind, your *wilful* crimes! and though you *appear* to support your characters, with satisfaction to yourselves, how many heart-burnings ye experience! what *false* spirits ye carry into the fascinating circle! I allude not to your exhilarating *resources*—the evaporating *æther*, or the absorbent *lavender*; the uses of these artificial drams, like all other intoxicating means, from *habit*, become wholly inefficient in their effect. I speak of those corroding jealousies which ebulliate on so many occasions, and lead you to act out of yourselves.

Of *sterling* beauty I have given my sketch;—then follows the unportioned woman, whose *beauty* shines dimly before the insatiate speculator in exalted life: rarely does this ineffable grace attract *honourable* notice: she may be handsome enough to excite the effrontery of the *manly* race; and, in his extreme *condescension*, a man of *rank* may rate her virtue at a price pro-

portioned to his power of being infamous. If he succeeds, I need not pourtray th fate of the "wretched bankrupt:"—if he is repulsed, as I trust and *know* he often is, what a charming opportunity for revenge! he, because he is a *leader*, he can make a party to dash the *moral* quiz, and hunt her from society, by inuendoes perfectly consistent with *his* ideas of superiority of *rank*.

If such things are, a defenceless woman, such as our heroine, must be exonerated from that appearance of vanity which her fears led her to anticipate. As reason directs us to value *each* gift that is bestowed upon us, it is not unreasonable to believe that the possessor of *beauty* is conscious of the possession; she may prize it, at a fair valuation, but she will know she has it, let the prude say what she will; and were she ignorant as simplicity could make her, the amateurs and the connoisseurs in this ever-current commodity would blazon the speaking fact, and, by over-rating its worth, reduce its *intrinsic* value: thus I aver, a

woman who estimates her personal advantages justly, need not be vain; with the most eminently endowed, the reign is short-lived; but she who holds the balance equal, and, with a woman's modesty, illuminates the " outward ornament" of her person by the internal light of her mind, she may *survive* her beauty, nor fear to hold a willing captive in *her* silken chains.

Dress is so usual an attendant on beauty, I feel I shall be pardoned, if I digress further, to speak on a point so important. Amelia saw her pupils deeply engaged in projecting new costume for the approaching evening. Lady Maria, with an honest blush, avowed, she thought pink became her: Amelia coincided, and, with infinite good humour, assisted her favourite in trimming her dress. Lady Charlotte threw aside all her pre-arranged finery, stating, she had resolved upon wearing simple white, with a small lace cap and an apron; " I shall be quite a little rustic," said the aspiring actress; " and when I offer my bowl

 of

of cream to Mr. Wentworth, I must look silly, and blush, and all that."

"You have *fixed* upon a Lingo," said Amelia, half-smiling; "but unless the gentleman is *prepared* to meet such an incident, I should fear the effect would be destroyed."

"Oh, no! aunt says he is very clever, and will understand it directly; indeed I should be vexed very much, if I thought he would not, for the dress is so frightfully plain, I cannot bear the idea of it."

Amelia was silent, yet she, who had seen more of our hero than her ladyship, had no faith in the plan's meeting his countenance. And here, in truth, we are forced to confess our dependant reverted to the state of her *own* wardrobe; she *must* be an insignificant personage, in so exalted an assemblage, yet she could not divest herself of a *wish* to appear as a gentlewoman filling an *inferior* situation; all attempts at *rivalité* would be ridiculous, even had her disposition led her to an emulation so ab-

surd;

surd; but there could be no reason why she should not wear what *became* her; she had heard Wentworth express his admiration of the way in which she dressed her hair, and, from *memory*, she was *scrupulously* exact in placing her natural tresses in the fashion he had approved. "Pure white," said our Englishman, in the presence of Mrs. Marnley and her *protegée*, one morning, "pure white is an emblem of innocence; and if women, while youth and beauty is given to them, adopted its use, I think they would look infinitely more charming." Not a vestige of colour was discernible in the attire of our heroine; even her cheeks seemed to partake the interesting hue; nor could *she* regret the pallid tincture which her fearful mind impressed, for again she recollected, this oracle, in her unhacknied estimation, had declared—"he loathed the countenance on which no intelligent beam could be *called*: if I address a woman whose features are encrusted beneath a mask," said this blunt islander, "my vanity is grievously mortified; I know

know not that she approves or decries my sentiments; she may *spoil* her face by flattering my address; and if I offend, *her* blushes would not *correct* my error." Mrs. Marnley, to whom this bold satire had been applied, required of her accuser, whether he, who was an adept in characters, had not his speeches classed, agreeably to the *ranks* of those with whom he associated? "Not prepared," said the unsophisticated Wentworth; "a simple, an unerring guide will ever direct the man who appreciates your sex properly. I believe the most *fashionable* of my acquaintance cannot call me impertinent; a thousand nameless nothings will mix in unmeaning conversations, and one is not called upon to be fastidiously correct, where the effort would excite derision rather than approbation; thus I rattle away the passing hour with the woman who expects mere compliment; but when I address the woman whose mind shines in her countenance, I am studious not to offend, lest, enthusiast as I am in all that adorns nature, I should call a censure, where I am

emulous

emulous of attaining a distinction." Now whether to impute our heroine's content in her pallid countenance to the *sentiments* thus avowed by Sidney, or to the glance which *accompanied* those sentiments, I will not pretend to say—certain it is, she did not feel discontented with her appearance; it was produced from the state of her feelings; and as they were natural, and, consequently, unaffected, her self-approbation, though evidently founded on a wish to please, was rather a tribute to superior taste, than a yielding to vanity.

It has been remarked, that the postscript of a *woman's* letter usually contains the most important matter: were I to delineate lady Tadcaster's ball at the fag-end of a chapter, my error would be similar. Leave we then the ladies to adjust their costume, and make ready to receive their visitors, while I prepare to attend the assembled guests, and speak of them as they are, nor " ought set down in malice."

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

"Most of the appearing mirth in the world, is not mirth but art; the wounded spirit is not seen, but walks under a disguise."

It was the order of lady Tadcaster that her nieces should not appear until the rooms were well filled. The *dairy*, the destined trap for our "Englishman," was screened from notice by a sylvan curtain, which formed a sort of partition in the second room; strong lights were placed behind to give effect to the landscape; and while the liveliest approbation was bestowed upon the glaring transparency, the exulting hostess was enjoying the surprise she had yet in store for her fancy-hunting guests.

A thousand tickets had been issued for this festive meeting; about half the num-

ber

ber had actually arrived, when our heroine and her pupils were summoned to attend the ball-room. A great proportion of the company were dancing when the ladies Dalton entered. "The fairy dance," that light enlivening tune, engaged the votaries of Terpsichore. The really magnificent appearance of the rooms, the well-dressed groups of beautiful women, added to the excellent harmony of the band, presented a scene to Amelia which excited her admiration. She cast a hasty glance towards the dancers, and following lady Charlotte, with lady Maria on her arm, advanced to lady Tadcaster.

"My sweet loves," said her ladyship, kissing the hands of her nieces alternately, "I hope you will not suffer by this exertion;—you shall dance *one* dance presently: it is quite against *my* judgment they appear; but their governess was so importunate, and gives them such credit for their solidity, I could not resist her arguments."

This palpable subterfuge was addressed

to

to an elderly lady, who sat by lady Tadcaster. Amelia stood in silent astonishment.

"You will find a seat if you look about," resumed her ladyship, turning to our heroine.

Lady Maria caught the arm of Amelia, and leading to a form behind the ottoman on which her aunt was seated, she took her place by her side.

"Lovely timidity," said lady Tadcaster, nodding her head; "what can be more charming!"

"Charlotte," said the surly dowager, whose scowling eye had been earnestly employed in scrutinizing Amelia and her companion; "so, child, you are not so bashful as Maria; *entre nous*, she is a little prude, and the men will laugh at her. Have you played cassino since I saw you? Remember, you owe me my revenge."

Lady Charlotte replied affirmatively to the encouraging veteran, declaring she had beaten lord Weybridge successively, in her three last attempts.

"Bravo!"

"Bravo!" said Mrs. Tibbits; "you will be an adept by the time you are '*brought out.*"

Just then the music ceased, and the dispersing dancers sought seats. While Amelia was regarding the manner of this item in a *fashionable* circle, where affected lassitude, hoydenish activity, playful vivacity, and automaton calmness, were visible, while yet she gazed, a smart tap on the shoulder caused her to start, when lord Weybridge, with a loud laugh, asked her "if she was dreaming in such a scene as the present?"

"No, my lord," said Amelia; "I am perfectly awake to the scene, and to your lordship's politeness."

"Do you dance to-night?" said he, disregarding her reply.

Amelia was silent. The question, though simple, carried a pang to her bosom. She had been accustomed to be considered a *personage* rather than a *cypher* in society; and though never *distinguished* as a *dancer*,

as

as a *woman*, and a *young* woman, it was not unnatural she should feel her present situation embarrassing.

"Perhaps you cannot dance," continued the peer: "by the way, there is a confounded scarcity of beaux to-night, so some of you must be content to look on. Maria, you must dance the next set with me," said the peer; "remember you are engaged." Lady Maria referred his lordship to her aunt. "Poh! poh!" said my lord; "it is a settled point—I am not to be refused, my sweet little novice.—She looks very lovely to-night," he resumed, addressing our heroine; "this girl will do execution—don't you think so?"

Amelia was not disposed to argue with his lordship, nor had she time to do so, for, at that moment, lady Tadcaster advanced, with a gentleman, whose commanding figure and open countenance claimed the attention of our heroine; he was evidently a military man, and his manner evinced that the fatigues of a soldier's life,

nor

nor its chequered usages, could divest a really polished mind of its attractive superiority. The ladies Dalton were led towards the gentleman, whose name did not reach the ear of Amelia; she heard him called Colonel, and, in his address to her pupils, she discovered *he* was the gentleman whose arrival from India had been mentioned by lady Tadcaster that morning. Lady Charlotte's eyes were evidently straying round the room in search of some expected guest. Lady Maria, whose hand yet remained in that of the colonel, was making her filial inquiries, with a zeal which seemed to interest her new friend. —"How like the general she is!" said he, turning to speak to lady Tadcaster; her ladyship had flown to greet a party just entering the room; the colonel smiled, and, with an air of gallantry, declared he had not the presumption to hope he should be allowed a long audience: "The young fellows may, with justice, accuse me of impertinence in detaining you," he continued,

nued, " yet I wish to have a little chat, if you are not engaged for the dance now forming."

" I am not engaged, I believe," said lady Maria; and leading the colonel to the sofa on which Amelia was sitting, she repeated all her former inquiries concerning her father; concluding, with an earnest look, and her eyes fixed on the colonel—" and will he never come home?"

" He will," said the softened soldier; " he talks of it seriously; and could *he* see the countenance I now behold, all that reluctance which has hitherto made him dread revisiting his native land would be done away."

" Is it possible that papa does not wish to come home?" asked lady Maria.

" His parental feelings are strictly in unison with his happy lot, in being the father of amiable children," resumed the colonel; " but, my young friend, the general is yet a mourner for your mother." Lady Maria started. " Compose yourself," he continued; " I must leave London to-morrow,

or

or I should not have glanced at a subject so serious, in a scene like the present; yet in this I should have gone counter to the wishes of your father, whose opinions are inconvertibly in favour of appeals to the feelings, while the mind is plastic to genuine impression." Lady Maria looked towards the persuasive speaker with tearful eyes. "Even these mixed and seemingly happy groups," said the colonel, "these varied characters, if viewed by your father by the aid of his accurate observation, their worth, or their insignificancy, would be so ably delineated, that a lesson of wisdom (usually so repulsive to the buoyant fancies of the young), by his colouring is the most fascinating effort of his imagination."

"I am sure you are very like the general," said the artless lady Maria, "that is, you speak just as he writes;" and she blushed profusely at the compliment she had so unguardedly expressed.

The colonel gazed on his companion with a mild expression of approbation; and

and looking towards our heroine, he added —"This is a mind which requires shelter; a premature introduction will destroy its original promise: don't you think so, madam?"

Amelia replied affirmatively—doing justice to the disposition of her favourite.

"I am an entire stranger to the manners and customs of my native land," resumed the colonel; "at least I am compelled to avow myself as such. I did imagine that the periodical and diurnal publications, which have regularly been transmitted to me, had, in a *degree*, informed me of the changes which fashions introduce, but I find my error in every inquiry I make. *Time*, which has not made any *variation* in his course, is yet *used* so differently now, I shall be obliged to arrange a calendar suited to the change, if only to spare my horses, for you cannot imagine that *bodily* fatigue is of any moment with a boy of my age;" and he smiled at his youthful companions.

Amelia,

Amelia, encouraged by the animated manner of the colonel, entered into conversation, and, in speaking of observances, took occasion to remark, that luxury and late hours were usual in India.

"The climate dictates in the latter case," replied the colonel; "there can be no enjoyment beneath the beams of a fervid sun. Luxury is imputed to us erroneously; we are, by no means, so much addicted to it as Europeans imagine."

"I left the country at too early an age to speak from my own knowledge," said Amelia; "yet all I have heard justifies my assertion—a love of ease, which is certainly the nurse of luxury, attaches to the Indian resident."

"You were born in India," said the colonel, regarding our heroine stedfastly; "allow me to ask your name?"

"Sidney," said the blushing culprit, almost choaked by the innocent fraud.

"Sidney!" repeated the colonel; "I have known many of the name—a branch

of my own family bore it. Was your father in the army?"

Trembling at the increasing embarrassment of her situation, Amelia answered by a faint "yes;" and the tears falling down her cheeks, repressed further inquiry from the colonel, who, in a half whisper, addressed to lady Maria, asked if she knew any of Miss Sidney's family? Amelia heard her relative situation in lady Tadcaster's family explained, with amiable delicacy, by her pupil; and, strange to tell, the elucidation effected no *change* of manner in the *informed* party; on the contrary, when lord Weybridge claimed the hand of lady Maria, and led her to her place in the dance, the colonel resumed the conversation.—"So you call us luxurious?" he continued; "how ungenerous, in a runaway such as you avow yourself to be!"

Amelia, smiling, replied she was almost tempted to revoke her opinion with regard to the luxury of the English Asiatics. "Your banishment entitles you to indulgence;

gence; and the greater proportion of foreign residents are exposed to the casualties of war, or, as civilians, active in their immediate pursuits. Luxury, in such cases, is scarcely censurable; it is more a relaxation than a supine error."

"You have drawn the line very handsomely," said the colonel, "and with a degree of justice highly applicable."

Our heroine bowed to the approving smile of the colonel, though she feared lest her diffuseness should make her appear prominent. Such sentiments from a very young woman might seem fastidious—it was not probable that a man, basking in the sunny beams of fortune, should understand how much *adversity* teaches—how the unmasked world inculcates her degrading truths to the child of sorrow, making her *old* in *worldly* wisdom, ere the spring of youth is past.

The colonel sought of our heroine the names and rank of the more conspicuous personages.

personages. Very few of them were known to Amelia.—"How long have you resided with lady Tadcaster?" asked he.

Amelia replied.

"I can imagine the task an irksome one, in many points," he continued; "yet I am so presuming as to solicit your continuance for a few months longer. In *confidence*, I apprize you that general Dalton is, most probably, on his voyage home; he is tenacious of having it known, being desirous of surprising his daughters. Though so recently arrived, I have learned that lady Tadcaster's house, though reputable in point of connexions, &c. is yet an exposed and dangerous asylum for girls whose fortunes are large. I should rejoice that your tempered character watched over these motherless treasures of my friend. I am a sort of physiognomist, and am certain you are competent to the important trust, though evidently young in years. Your countenance reminds me of an esteemed and long-lost relative

relative—Sidney, you say, is your name?" and he looked on the trembling Amelia inquisitively.

"Yes, sir."

"I beg I may not distress you—pardon my unguarded warmth—a better feeling than curiosity dictated my inquiry. Shall I seek a partner for you, Miss Sidney? I cannot bear to see so young a woman looking on. If I were some twenty years younger, I should think myself a happy fellow to lead you down a dance. It is not the *luxuries*, but the *toils* of a soldier's life, which deprive me of a distinction I should highly prize;" and, rising, he departed on a mission, well intended on his part, but certainly without the assent of our heroine, on whom all the kindness of the intention was lost. She felt how erroneously the colonel had judged the gentlemen in this *elevated* circle. "I shall be pointed at!—good Heavens, what shall I do?" sighed the unconscious dependant, and looking around her, with an intention of escaping out of the

 room,

room, her eyes met those of Wentworth, fixed upon her with a scrutinizing expression. She had no longer the power to move—a sort of spell seemed to rivet her to her seat. Would he bear resentment?—how had she offended him?—never intentionally;—and if he had, on more than one occasion, stepped forward to spare her mortification in situations where *neglect* had made her conspicuous, the *present* was one to claim his attention; she was not only sitting alone, but the only *female* on that side of the room.

While thought was thus active in encreasing her discomfort, she saw a party join Wentworth and depart into an inner room; hope sickened at the sight—the whole scene was lost to her view—the music was not heard.—This chaotic feeling was succeeded by a lively *mental* flash—pride rushed in to support her half-formed resolution: she arose, and had reached a door, through which she could retire unobserved, when Wentworth approached hastily—"Are you going, madam?"

Amelia curtsied her reply.

"Will you allow me to see you to your carriage?"

"*My* carriage!" said Amelia, looking calmly at our hero; "this is not the usual manner of Mr. Wentworth;" and endeavouring to hide the disappointment her heart had sustained, she hastened out of the room.

"One word, Miss Sidney," said Wentworth, pursuing the fugitive; "are you not under the protection of Mrs. Tibbits, lord Weybridge's aunt?"

"No, sir; I reside in this house with the ladies Dalton."

"A thousand thanks!" said the delighted Wentworth, seizing the hand of Amelia, and pressing it to his lips. "Forgive my error and my presumption," he continued, as the surprised and *half*-offended dependant withdrew her hand. "You will return to the ball-room—I must not be denied." Whether it was that persuasiveness on which our hero founded his lover's theory,

or the sympathetic link which will *exist* in minds of certain mould, I know not; the effect substantiated his often-asserted opinion, for Amelia had resumed her seat in lady Tadcaster's drawing-room, and was replying to the animated recriminations of the *self-judging* Wentworth, ere she knew she had moved.

"I have been seeking you," said the colonel, advancing to our heroine; "my mission has failed; *waltzes* are to follow this dance, and I had an idea you would not wish to make one in the *giddy* throng —or have you found a partner?" and he bowed to Wentworth.

"The word bears a most interesting definition," said our hero, with a glow of animation. "If you are inclined to dance, Miss Sidney," he continued, "I shall be most happy to attend you, though I profess myself a very idle votary of the fantastic goddess."

Amelia declined the offer; her *woman's* vanity was gratified, in being asked by the handsomest

handsomest man in the room: it is probable she did not pause on this perishable grace, but classed it with the good qualities she knew the solicitor to possess—it is not essential to follow her feelings; suffice it to say, she was content to be a spectator. She had been asked, yet she trusted to finding an opportunity of explaining that the zeal of the colonel, not her avowed wish, had caused *her* to be proposed to any man in the present circle.

The colonel resumed his seat by Amelia, and entering into conversation with Wentworth, displayed a mind of uncommon vivacity.—"I have been hinting to this lady," said he, "that the perverted uses of time infringes on my convenience most materially; I am an early riser, and having fixed a day for my departure from town, resolved upon making a few calls before I went:—at one house I learned that the ladies had not retired to rest till six o'clock, of course they were invisible: at another, the lady was engaged with an artist, and

 could

could not be disturbed: recollecting that my fair friend was equal in years with myself, I thought the servant had mistaken, and renewed my inquiries, laying an emphasis on the name; the fellow assured me he was correct—he was just taking her ladyship's apron to her boudoir, by order—and he displayed a white leather apron, ornamented with ribbon; my ignorant surprise at an appendage so extraordinary made the man smile—'My lady is engaged with Mr. Seal, the shoemaker, sir, taking a lesson, and this is her apron,' said he. I absolutely rejoiced at the whimsical explanation, for I had imagined that *masonry* was no longer a secret."

Wentworth laughed with the lively satirist.

"Again I pursued my way," continued the colonel, "and referring to my tablets, selected a name which used to be classed with sober habits; it was past three o'clock, and I felt certain of finding my friend; to my wish, she was at home; I followed the servant up three pair of stairs: conceive

my

my surprise, sir, when the man, observing that I stopped to recover my fatigue, in a low voice, said—'My lady is at breakfast, sir.' Almost exhausted by the exertion, I entered an *attic* apartment, most sumptuously furnished, where the languid fashionable, scarcely awake, was sipping her coffee: she was glad to see me, but it was the cordiality of an abstracted mind. I remembered her an unaffected little girl, who, in the character of an adventurer, made her appearance at the matrimonial market in India; there were many allowances to be made for *her*; her beauty procured her a good establishment, and her subsequent conduct made her valued, while she remained with us;—how then was I surprised to see her the victim of dissipation—altered in person—the vigour of her mind wholly obscured by her frivolous pursuits! When I inquired for her husband, she believed he was well—she heard from him last week—he was in Yorkshire. I remarked that her breakfast-room was a most elevated

 habitation;

habitation: it was good for her health—she enjoyed the pure air—she always studied her constitution. I plainly told her my shattered machine would not bear the fatigue of visiting such exalted *elegantes*. Can any thing be more absurd, sir? is it not refining upon folly, to be so conspicuously ridiculous?"

"Undoubtedly it is," said our hero; "and when we reflect how deeply a *political* exposition, which, by naming the *garret* as the fit retreat of the incompetent tenant, gave offence to English sensibility, not less than English pride—when we recollect this, it is scarcely possible to refrain from deploring that these voluntary garreteers are creatures blessed with means to chuse their habitations."

"Wentworth," said lord Osterly, "talk not of habitations; come with me and see the most unique little cottage imaginable, and such a divinity its resident!—Come," he added, taking the arm of Sidney. Wentworth arose reluctantly, preferring to attend

attend the peer, rather than detain him near Amelia.

"Of what cottage is he speaking?" asked the colonel.

Our heroine guessed it was the dairy, and expressed her surmise.

"A very odd conceit," replied he; "I suppose it is intended for general inspection—shall we take a peep?" and he gave his hand to Amelia, to lead her to the scene of action.

Our heroine knew not how to act. To refuse, without assigning a reason, was impossible; to assign her real doubts, was too humiliating:—giving her hand to the gallant old soldier, she passed through the rooms.

"Who is she?" asked some of the uninformed visitors.

"The governess of the ladies Dalton," growled Mrs. Tibbits: "quite a chit. I blame Tadcaster for engaging such a girl."

"She has a very fine carriage," said a

young man, as he poised his eye-glass to improve his pointed stare.

"You are blind, we all know," resumed the dowager "Who would name carriage, when lady Charlotte Dalton is present? she is a perfect model of grace."

"That's right—where is she?" said Mr. Templeton; "we have lost her. What a rare squeeze there seems to be in the next room! I must make a push—shall I convoy you?"

"No," said Mrs. Tibbits; "I don't want to be suffocated; but if you can learn where refreshments are to be had, report it; I am half famished." Mr. Templeton mixed in the crowd.

"Are we to have any snug *pic-nics, al fresco,* this season?" asked a lady of Mrs. Tibbits, with a smile of saucy import.

"I have cut with that squad," replied the surly matron. "No, no! I am not to be hoaxed so again. Every body was ready to

to *join*, as they *said*; but when the stock was produced, one had brought cyder—it was a *cool, light* beverage; another the rolls, and, perhaps, a *sallad*; not a *solid*, or a bottle of Madeira, unless *my* foresight had made the provision: and, worst of all, *my* carriage was made the vehicle for transporting their *shabby* contributions. I will give them leave to starve me, when I am again found in their society."

"To your *generous* disposition, such parsimony must appear particularly odious," replied the fair hoaxer. "I have often lamented to *my* friends, that a character so unsuspicious should be so seriously abused."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Tibbits. "I wish Templeton would make his appearance; I am impatient for something to eat." At this instant, lord Weybridge, in a fustian suit, with a tray of sweets, cream, and ices, entered the room; his whimsical rusticity excited general laughter.

"In the name of goodness, my lord, how has

has this transformation been effected?" said Miss Parsloe, the designing tantalizer of Mrs. Tibbits.

"I comed from the dairy yonder there," said my lord. "Our Cowslip—she's a mortal nice girl; and sends her humble service to this good company, and hopes you will like her cream."

Mrs. Tibbits seized an ice, and laughing at her nephew, detained him, by skilful manœuvring, until she had swallowed that and taken another.—"They are excellent!" said the voracious epicure; "the best I ever tasted," and she took a third glass.

"Anan!" said my lord; "I fakins, I guess you don't often get such good things;" and he evaded the outstretched hand of his epicurean kinswoman.

His lordship pursued his new avocation with alacrity, raising a laugh wherever he appeared. Having disposed of the contents of the tray, he was returning to the dairy, when he encountered a group, consisting

sisting of Wentworth, lord Osterly, Mr. Supple, lady Morbury, Amelia, lady Maria, and the colonel. Lady Morbury had met our heroine with amiable cordiality, expressing her regret that lady Anna could not be of the party—she had been depressed by taking leave of a friend, and had not spirits for company;—"but she bade me assure you of her regard," continued lady Morbury, "and that she was projecting a little plan, which, she trusted, would prove mutually agreeable."

Amelia received the graceful condescensions of her ladyship with grateful delight. Lady Maria whispered to lady Morbury how much she loved Miss Sidney.

"I knew *you* would," replied lady Morbury; "she is worthy of your regard, my dear."

Wentworth, who appreciated the kind manner of her ladyship in a degree scarcely inferior to that of our heroine, found his spirits elevated at the distinction bestowed upon his favourite. He had laughed

at

at the dairy, when led by lord Osterly to contemplate its structure—had *more* than smiled on discovering lady Charlotte as the artless Cowslip; but when joined by the group we have announced, his remarks became animated and highly entertaining.

Amelia heard the various opinions passed on her younger pupil; and though many of the company had applauded the fair rustic, as the most *fascinating* and lovely creature they ever saw, a few, and they were the more discerning, in her estimation, declared it to be a pity that so young a girl should be placed in so conspicuous a point of view. Lord Osterly, to whom the novelty was highly attractive, made love through the casement window.—" My sweet little Cowslip, my violet, my lily, my rose!" said the peer, " give me, from that fair hand, a sip of cream." Lady Charlotte presented a cup through the window. " Touch the brim with those roseate lips," said my lord. The flattered hoyden complied. " The cup with nectar flows," sang lord Osterly,

Osterly, taking the snowy beverage from her hand.

"Rank poison," said the colonel, in a half-whisper to Sidney; "could her father believe this!" and Wentworth gathered from the zealous soldier the nature of that interest his unguarded warmth had partly betrayed.

"La!" said Miss Parsloe, who had been eyeing the structure minutely, "how unnecessary to write *dairy* upon the window-frame!—any one who could mistake it must be stupid, it is so natural."

"That means," said lord Weybridge, placing his hand on the glaring characters, "that, as a *dairy* window, it pays no tax."

"By Heaven, whoever looks *in* at the window must pay a tax," said lord Osterly, sighing.

"I presume to differ with you, my lord," interjoined Supple; "a *voluntary* offering is no *tax*;" and he bowed obsequiously to the circle around him.

"Honey

"Honey and milk," said lord Weybridge, with a significant smile.

"It is a land of *promise*," said our hero to the colonel; "but wanting a *warning* hand, it will *lead* to *captivity*, in place of chasing the remembrance of past suffering, as in days of old."

The colonel shook his head; when lord Weybridge, with a manner highly comic, begged Cowslip to hand out some "three times skimmed sky-blue; here comes old Tibbits—let us give her a surfeit."

"My sweet Charlotte," said the waddling dowager, "another of those delicious ices, and then I must try and make a whist-table."

Lady Charlotte, who was no respecter of age, entered, with alacrity, into his lordship's joke; mixing together an unpalatable jumble of sweets, she presented it to Mrs. Tibbits. The jest was lost; the voracious feeder, though evidently aware of the imposition, swallowing it without a remark.

Wentworth,

Wentworth, who had been contrasting the prominent character of the mimic Cowslip with that of Amelia, now turned towards our heroine, purposing to impart an opinion he had formed of lady Maria, when he beheld Amelia in conversation with lord Osterly, Supple, and the colonel. Sidney approached the little group; to his surprise, Supple seemed to observe a marked deference towards the dependant.—" It is a great sacrifice for so young a woman," said lord Osterly, addressing Amelia; " that is, I should think it must be a horrid bore to instruct grown girls."

" My dear lord," interrupted Supple, " the task is a most delightful one, suited to a superior mind, and so eminently advantageous in a national point of view, that our sex should unite to applaud the woman who dedicates her time to an undertaking so important. The Romans, my lord—reflect what effectual service their women rendered the state, by educating their youth."

" It

"It is a matron's office," replied my lord, staring boldly in the face of our heroine. "Positively, I would as soon consign a young woman to a convent, as make her a preceptress. Is it not a devilish stupid life?" he continued.

Amelia was too much abashed by the freedom of the peer to make any reply; her countenance seemed to ask that refuge of which a delicate woman must ever feel the want, when she finds herself shut out from the courtesies of her own sex.

Wentworth, whose feelings would have impelled him to defend a pursuit which his principles led him to approve, yet believed the subject might distress the being he was anxious to honour. "Your earlier education was not directed by woman," whispered Wentworth in the ear of lord Osterly; "mine was: I have no doubt but, *intellectually*, I owe her gratitude—certainly, as a man, I worship the remembrance; her influence was so mild, yet so judicious, that my consideration for the sex is but a just

just remuneration for *her* gracious tutelage."

"So then you make love, dangle, &c. only by way of keeping your gratitude awake," said my lord; "you will allow me to credit as much as I please, in this case. *Entre nous,* lady Anna would not be much flattered by such an exposition of your sentiments."

"This is wilful perverseness," said Wentworth; "you know better, my lord. For myself, I can bear your *badinage,* only be cautious with regard to the lady."

Amelia caught so much of the conversation as caused her to doubt the report of Wentworth's intended marriage; indeed, she had considered her ladyship, what she really was, attached to the sailor who was her shadow at the masquerade; yet, as changes occur frequently in fashionable life, she knew not what might have happened in the space of a few weeks, more especially when the pretensions of the ascribed lover were considered.

As

As if our hero had imagined Amelia was a party in the attack of lord Osterly, he sought her eye—it fell beneath his gaze; and though the expression, as implying modesty, was peculiarly suited to his taste, he looked as though the mantling blush which succeeded was infinitely more interesting to his feelings. The fan which Amelia held, and on which her receding eyes were cast, was suddenly thrown on the floor, in consequence of a familiar tap on the shoulder; our heroine turned to discover who it was, when lady Tadcaster, in a tone half-authoritative and half-familiar, said—"Lady Maria has torn her dress—go help her to fasten it, in some way or other."

Amelia's cheeks were now suffused with a crimson dye. To give her assistance in such a case could not have been objectionable, had the request been dictated with common civility: there is something so repulsive in the idea of a command—an *order*, that the most abject being in existence

ence obeys the mandate with any thing than zeal—than alacrity.

The colonel and Wentworth, to whom this trait of power appeared truly unamiable, exchanged a glance perfectly intelligible.

"Come," said Sidney, presenting the fan of our heroine, "shall *we* endeavour to arrange this momentous business?" and he drew the arm of Amelia through his own. "Osterly," continued Wentworth, "*you* understand costume—we will give you an opportunity of exerting your taste."

Lord Osterly gladly followed, though a stranger to what had passed.

That formidable *pronoun*, on which the doom of an *author* depends—that ever-prominent, yet veering refuge of party politics and disaffected boasting—this impressive *we*, in the present instance, took a station highly consolatory to our dependant: if it was only his *consideration* for a *woman*, it was kind—if he meant to support her by his presence, it was no less kind: but if it was

not *presumption* to imagine such a thing, certainly, in the manner of Mr. Wentworth, his *equal* might have ascribed his evident interest to a motive truly interesting. With a speed in unison with her agitated mind, our heroine reached the ottoman on which the lady hostess was seated; her fair pupil, who had no idea of Amelia's intent, made room for our heroine to sit beside her. Lady Tadcaster, whose immediate ire had been excited by the attentions of Wentworth, as directed to the dependant, looking over her shoulder, with a haughty glance, said—"Maria, Miss Sidney will adjust your torn gown."

"Oh dear! by no means," said the unaffected girl; "I have managed it perfectly well, I believe."

Amelia offered her services. Lady Maria refused them steadily. Wentworth, who saw no reason for intruding lord Osterly's whimsicalities on the gentle Maria, with a good-natured smile gave him his discharge.

"Not gone yet," said the peer. "Let me

me look at this cobweb misery, my sweet little sylph," he continued, endeavouring to raise her ladyship from her seat; "you have no idea how well I understand drapery."

"No, my lord; indeed I cannot—I will not," said lady Maria, offended by the intrusive manner of his lordship, and she withdrew her hand from the laughing peer.

"Maria," said Mrs. Tibbits, who sat by lady Tadcaster, "you are a fastidious little prude—quite an altered creature within these few weeks," and she glanced a scornful look towards Amelia, as the *cause* of the lamented change.

"Mr. Wentworth," said lady Tadcaster, rising, "are you an advocate for this sort of self-will in such young ladies?"

"It is a very correct trait of delicacy—of retiredness," replied Sidney, in a low voice; "I presume to think your ladyship has miscalled the motive of your niece."

"Oh! well, if *you* think so, I am satis-

 fied:—

fied:—we look upon you as the Grandison of modern days."

"I am neither ambitious of the appellation, nor yet so credulous as to hear your ladyship without a smile. When I *affect* a character, treat me as an actor; but until I do, though amenable to reproof from *ladies*, I am not equal to their derision;" and he bowed to the surprised flatterer.

"You are excessively provoking! we poor women are so awkward at expressing ourselves, and you have no mercy on us. I declare I am sincere in what I said;—nay, Miss Sidney knows I always distinguish you by the name; and, indeed, my usual habit of assimilating likeness in characters, has led me often to think that my timid little Maria was excessively like Emily Jarvis."

Wentworth more than crimsoned at the assimilating talent of her ladyship; recovering from his confusion, he added—"Have you found a Miss Byron for me?"

"No, not I; there never was such a woman," said lady Tadcaster, vexed at the direction

rection the eyes of our hero had taken. "I hope I shall never meet such an over good lady; she would be my abhorrence."

"Then I must drop MY character, if I wish to retain your ladyship's favour," said Sidney, laughing.

"I believe you are very unexceptionable, though an oddity," resumed her ladyship. "Ah! my dear lord John, how are you?" she continued; "where is lady Nugent?"

"She was stolen from my side by Weybridge," replied lord John; "I was not to be tempted away until I had made my bow here."

"You are always gallant, my lord; it is absolutely necessary to bear in mind that you are a married man: but tell me, am I to be honoured by the presence of sir George and his fair bride?"

"I certainly did hear something of the sort," said my lord; "I know they dine out; we shall see them, I have no doubt."

"Lady Beverly is a lovely woman," continued

tinued her ladyship; "so natural—so charming; I was quite captivated with her at Dunloe's the other evening;—she will be quite the rage for the short remaining season."

Lord John smiled incredulously, but, unwilling to argue the point, he begged an introduction to her ladyship's niece. Lady Maria received the overture gracefully yet timidly: his lordship, mistaking Amelia for her sister, was entering into conversation with the dependant, when lady Tadcaster, perceiving his error, stepped forward.—"That young person," and she carried her haughty brow significantly towards our heroine, "is the governess of the ladies Dalton: at her request I suffered the dear girls to be present to-night—of course it was advisable she should be at hand, to guard their inexperience and excessive timidity. Mr. Wentworth will shew you into the interior apartment, and present my other treasure to your lordship."

Wentworth looked vexed at the arrangement

ment of lady Tadcaster; and though he doubted her assertion with regard to Amelia's having pressed her pupils into society, he could not forbear addressing a look of inquiry towards the accused. To his wish, he saw an expression of indignation on her brow; and, more, lady Maria appeared to be palliating the matter, in a tone of sweet conciliation.

Sidney departed with lord John, who, in his turn, was remarking the lines and demarkations which very *fashionable* people designate, where, in fact, the *advantages* rest with the proscribed parties. Wentworth was anxious to get rid of his appointment, and scarcely attended to the remark of his friend.

"Nugent," said lady John, as she took the arm of her husband, "what is your opinion of this?" and she led him to the dairy.

Lord John smiled—"The appearance is pretty," said my lord; "what is the de-

sign—the use to which it is applied in the present case?"

"See," continued her ladyship, "the thrifty Cowslip and her noble Lingo."

"Weybridge, why are you in masquerade?—the permission is highly flattering."

"Indeed, my lord, it was not I who sanctioned this," said lady Charlotte, leaning carelessly through the lattice; "he made one of the domestics unrobe, and volunteered his services; he is so troublesome—do pray take compassion on me, and take him away."

"There has been a strange omission," said lord John, looking affectedly grave; "is there no man-trap set on these premises?"

"Excellent! bravo, Nugent!" said lord Osterly, laying his hand on the shoulder of the peer. "The man-trap is *in* the window," he whispered; "and here comes the noble planner."

Lady Tadcaster approached.—"You admire

mire our little whim, my lord—I see you do;—is not she a bewitching girl?—such *naiveté!* How did Wentworth acquit himself?" she continued; "he is so odd;—I fear I deputed him to an office he did not understand."

"Nugent's discernment anticipated my services," said Sidney, addressing his hostess; "but I submit to your censure;—I am a very awkward fellow in these sort of matters."

"My dear Mr. Wentworth, how insuperably modest! you must not mind my bantering; the pleasure I derive in seeing my friends around me gives an ease, a thoughtlessness to my manner, which throws me on their generosity."

"You shall not find *me* a niggard in this predicament," said Sidney, smiling.

"Do get me an ice," resumed lady Tadcaster; "I am quite exhausted;—why are you so reserved?—go, Charlotte will assist you."

Wentworth expressed her ladyship's wish to the simpering Cowslip.

"Positively he is a ridiculous quiz," said lady Tadcaster, in a half whisper to lady Nugent; "what *young* man would hesitate to give his attention to a girl like Charlotte?"

"There is a report that a *trap* is concealed in the dairy," said lady John, looking saucily at her companion, "and you know a decidedly elegant figure might be spoiled by coming in contact with such an insidious punishment."

Lady Tadcaster looked vexed; recovering her composure, she added—"Hearts are the sacrifices which beauty demands; but where so much chilling prudence is evident, the offering can never be a tribute worthy of acceptance."

"What did you *expect* from *this* novelty?" asked lady John, looking archly.

"Expect!" said lady Tadcaster, in surprise; "why I expected that my friends would

would be amused by my poor endeavours to entertain them."

"You have calculated justly," said lord John; "the scene is highly amusing;" and taking the arm of his discomfited hostess, he led her through the rooms, seasoning his remarks with that sort of compliment which he knew suited his companion.

Had Wentworth heard the retort of lady Nugent, it is possible he would have deprecated her honest sarcasm; yet, though the talent be admitted to be dangerous, it is a species of philippic which the prominent character earns; it stands them in good need; and were it dispensed more frequently, might help to lower that immoderate and self-deceiving supineness which so totally obscures common sense, if not common principle.

The loiterers were now driven to their seats; waltzes commenced, and the sweeping curves of the emulative parties called forth a thousand unmeaning plaudits from the *unmeaning* part of the company. Amelia,

lia, with lady Maria, (who had positively declined dancing a waltz with lord Weybridge,) had been joined by Miss Parsloe, Wentworth, and the colonel. Mr. Supple took his station behind our hero, waiting his remarks ere he uttered his own.

"Lingo should have danced with Cowslip," said the colonel to Sidney.

"My friend lord Osterly, whose superior skill in waltzing is generally acknowledged, he has stepped before lord Weybridge, you perceive, Mr. Wentworth."

"So I perceive, sir," said Sidney; "it is a most enviable superiority," and he smiled.

"Do you allude to my lord's partner, or his excellence in the science?" asked Supple.

"To both, undoubtedly, sir; it is impossible to separate such apparent union."

Lady Maria, whose attention was not so much engaged as to prevent her hearing the remark of Wentworth, regarded him with unaffected seriousness; she seemed wounded,

wounded, while she felt that the exhibition was censurable. Sidney caught her eye—he saw what passed in her mind; drawing a seat before the little *coterie,* he asked her ladyship why *she* declined to join the waltzers?

"I don't like them, sir; indeed, I never learned to waltz; but my aunt likes them, and *approves* of my sister's dancing them."

"It is a very sufficient reason," said Sidney, "as implying obedience—always a graceful charm in the young: yet how shall I reconcile my assertion, by avowing that your refusing to partake in the *intoxicating* whirl appears to me a preferable decision."

Just then lady Tadcaster, who, with delight, beheld our hero's present association, approached:—"Are you unsuccessful?" said she; "does my timid girl continue inflexible? Maria, you would oblige me by dancing a waltz;—it is fastidious to refuse Mr. Wentworth."

"Lady Maria has not refused me," said Wentworth;

Wentworth; "I am no dancer, and detest these foreign introductions. I was just expressing my admiration of your niece's firmness;—let me entreat you will not require her to sacrifice her opinion in a point so truly commendable."

"Well, if you insist upon it, I suppose I must be silent. Never was there so striking a similarity in character, as between you and this dear novice; such sober, quiet, moral souls—it is really amusing to observe ye; you were formed for each other," said lady Tadcaster, as she glided off to join lady Morbury and some other of her visitors.

Wentworth was confounded by the boldness of this speech; there appeared so much design in all she said, that the simple comments he had addressed to lady Maria gave him uneasiness. Vanity is generally imputed to personable men: there may, in many instances, be justice in the application; yet I verily believe our sex are accountable for its *exuberance:* the very

very foibles of a handsome man are distinguished; he is wooed into difficulties, and frequently *trepanned irrevocably.* "There must be a great degree of weakness in the man who is thus blinded," says the *judicious* reader.—Granted; for vanity is usually most conspicuous where *weakness* predominates; but to imagine that a *species* of vanity will not find lodgment even with a man of sense, is to give human nature credit for a super-excellence it never yet possessed. Allowing that the clear-sightedness of an intellectual man leads him to place to his *fortune* what is *addressed* to his *exterior,* the *latitude* given to his decisions must indisputably increase his self-importance; his power to select is a stimulus to vanity; he grows critical in his taste, because he is pampered into an high opinion of his discernment; and though a *few* may withstand these anti-feminine besiegers, *many* might be found who succumb to the methodized circumvallation, and become the very creatures they have scoffed.

If lady Tadcaster's remark gave Wentworth a momentary cause for vexation, it is equally certain lady Maria was pained by its personality; she passed her arm through that of Amelia, as if to gain confidence by its support. The colonel gazed on her with an expression of approbation, and leaning towards our heroine, he bade her continue to enforce the worth of a manner so unassuming.—" My friend will thank you for it as it deserves," he added; " the poor child is surrounded by dangers; I persuade myself you will endeavour to remain with her till the general arrives."

" Indeed, sir, I cannot *promise* an acquiescence to your wish," said Amelia, in a low voice; " circumstances may remove me suddenly; I shall not tempt a change by any frivolousness on my part, but I certainly consider my continuance very precarious."

" I regret to hear it, though I can believe your reasons just," said the colonel.

Sidney was an attentive observer of the nabob's

nabob's manner; it is true, he was a man advanced in life, yet his person was prepossessing, and his mind highly cultivated; he had heard him called a *nabob* by more than one lady in the rooms, and as this was, in itself, an attraction which would *purchase* a heart with thousands of women, a transient distrust of our heroine's principles stole to the bosom of Wentworth. Supple saw the internal conflict; and in possession of a fact, which, if divulged, would have changed the fortunes of our heroine, and placed her in the sphere of independance, he delighted in watching the mental discomfiture, remaining an attendant on the party, in the pure hope of diverting the colonel from any conversation which could lead to the éclaircissement he dreaded.

"You are a most fortunate man, sir," said he, bowing to Wentworth; "I always observe that the most enviable associations are given to your acceptance: it will be a matter

matter of universal interest, when you *do* make your election."

"So you say," said Wentworth, coldly.

"It is the general opinion, sir," said Supple, in nowise dismayed by the contemptuous countenance of Sidney. "Here comes one of your favourites," he continued; "I will be judged by lady John," and he advanced towards her ladyship, and leading her to a seat, asked if the fashionable world was not deeply interested in the marriage of Mr. Wentworth?

"Certainly," said lady John, smiling: "as we all know he has been wonderfully adroit in escaping the nets *laid* for him, we shall be curious to see into what snare he falls at last."

The colonel addressed lady John, sportively inquiring what sort of nets were now used in the fashionable circles?

"They are various, sir," said the fair satirist. "We go over the ground *incog.*—learn the weak side, and apply ourselves to

undermine;

undermine; or, by *sympathy*, convert our *subject*:—One *dances* into wedlock—another *sings* herself into chains; one 'plays the devil,' and by attitude becomes a wife—another dances waltzes, which, you must allow, is a very engaging and attractive mode of attack."

The colonel bowed, with a meaning perfectly intelligible.

"What a funereal phiz, my dear friend!" said lady John, turning to our hero; "I read your dissentient voice in your countenance—these waltzes offend your bachelor feelings: is it not so?"

"Most certainly," said Sidney. "I *hear* them praised, and I *see* them performed; and I ask myself, are these my countrywomen? ENGLISHWOMEN—overstepping that modesty which *used* to characterize our island. Observe this mixed assemblage; some are strangers to each other—some intimates; can the familiarity which distinguishes this style of dancing be considered delicate?—would a *really* chaste mind

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASW

mind suffer such freedom?—see, there is one led from the EXHIBITION, nearly fainting:—it is worse than thoughtless—it is absolute error!"

"What a famous waltz that was!" said lord Weybridge, throwing himself on the ground, at the feet of lady Maria; "we kept it up rarely. How do you like them, colonel?"

"They are very astonishing, sir; I am in amaze to find the *English* ladies such *close* imitators of nations less moral than our own."

"The English character *was* certainly very tame," said my lord; "we are brushing it off, my dear sir; every approach towards refinement annoys a certain class of observers. Bigotry is an antediluvian principle with us. You will be reconciled in time. What can be more charming than that delicious whirl?—it is absolutely intoxicating! Then the delight of *supporting* the fair creature, who is scarcely conscious of the honour she confers upon us."

"It

"It is an intoxicating exhibition," said Sidney, casting a look of reprehension towards the peer, whose bold delineation offended his ear. "You have passed a just, though, I believe, an unconscious censure on the lamentable introduction."

"Really, sir," said Miss Parsloe, whose taciturnity had been profound, "I must think you are too severe; can any thing be more fascinating than lady Charlotte Dalton's style? so much grace and action, that it seems quite wonderful such a sylph-like form can bear so much fatigue."

"Lady Charlotte is very handsome, and dances well," said Sidney. "I can admire her when she mixes in the simple country dance, or a reel; but all exhibitions are inconsistent with my ideas of woman."

"What a Goth!" said lord Weybridge, "Wentworth, I put you down on the condemned list;—you are a snarling bachelor."

"You, my lord, are the *Lingo* of the night," said the colonel. "What says Sal-

lust

lust on this subject?—'*Saltebat melius quam necesse est probæ.*"

"That's a poser," said the peer; "I am no *linguist*, though you term me a *Lingo*. Construe the sentence, Wentworth; I know your memory is clear."

Wentworth, in a low voice, replied—"She danced much better than became a modest woman—that I believe to be the literal sense—we will say a *delicate* woman."

"You are too lenient," said the peer, sarcastically. "I pity your moral miseries; your life must be most agreeably stupid."

"I bear it heroically," replied Sidney, smiling.

"Were you at Dunloe's the other evening?" asked Miss Parsloe of the peer.

"I was; it was a famous squeeze. Have you heard what a scrape she has got into?"

"No; what is it—pray tell me?" and she looked greedily anxious to learn the interesting fact.

"Why she lent her rooms for C——'s concert. You know she has a happy knack of

grasping

grasping at distinctions in the cheapest way: —well, instead of confining herself to the number *she* was *entitled* to receive, she exceeded it by more than a hundred, and, what is worse, invited them earlier, and thus had occupied all the best seats before the PAY *people* came."

"What a shabby creature! Go on, my lord; how did she manage it?"

"Why the ticket-folks grumbled. C—— had only hired a certain quantity of chairs; the heat was excessive; murmurs, hints, and squabbling ensued; the enraged musician vented his anger on the minor performers—all became discord; and had not Dunloe, with affected suavity, withdrawn her *volunteers* into an adjoining room, we should have had a famous row. I hear she has been obliged to compromise with C——, and promise him a second and *exclusive* performance, before the season closes."

"I rejoice to hear it—she is such a nig-

gard,

gard. Pray, my lord, did she introduce any novelty worthy of notice?"

"No—yes; there was a fine girl, who is a good spec, I hear: but, however, she was not *very* extraordinary;—she did not attract much."

"Well then, she will be vexed," replied Miss Parsloe. "Do you know she refused to chaperon lady Maudlin's daughter?—yes; upon my word, I heard her decline it; and she told me there was no *credit* in introducing a mid-beauty, as she called her; besides, the Maudlins are poor, and have a numerous family."

"Faith, I believe the girl in question may take," said lord Weybridge, "if they don't treat us too often with her presence."

"Now really that is cruel, my lord, and so ungallant; I should not have expected such a remark from you."

"Then I have surprised you," said the peer; "I know you like novelty. You little timid fairy," continued his lordship, addressing

addressing lady Maria, "why do you smile? I see a lurking meaning in your eye. Maria, you would be irresistible, if you were animated."

"Lady Maria wants no new charm to make her amiable," said Sidney; "she is not to be spoiled by your flattery, my lord."

"This is the specific poison with such a novice," replied lord Weybridge. "Wentworth, you know your ground."

"Ascribe no motive than the true one," said our hero. "I consider a *natural* character a miracle in this artificial era—quite a novelty, as our friend Miss Parsloe would say; and when I express my humble approbation, I have no meaning than a wish that qualities which outlive *novelty* may continue to adorn lady Maria Dalton," and he bowed to the blushing lady Maria.

"How I wish Osterly was at hand!" said the peer; "he would quiz you properly—I am not equal to you to-night."

"Pardon me, my lord," interjoined Supple. "The vivacity of lord Osterly, at


times,

times, may give an *empressement* to his manner; but, in the *present* instance, his *discernment* would teach him what was due."

"That's admirable!" said lord Weybridge—"Supple a defender of starched principles! By the way, where is your old pupil? he has disappeared. Is he cut up?—dished? You know his den, I should suppose?"

"My lord, my lord!" replied the alarmed sycophant, "respect private sorrows. Forgive me if I decline your inquiry for the present."

"Straw and a dark room for Mr. Supple!" said the peer, starting on his feet, "he is insane. I swear I will seek Osterly, and inquire how he treats you when the fit is on."

"Here, my lord," said Supple, with a smile, in which fear and vexation was blended, "let me set you right on this lamentable subject;" and taking the arm of lord Weybridge, he drew him to a distant part of the room.

The

The colonel cast a glance after them, then addressing Sidney, he remarked the manner of Supple as extraordinary. "Such obstrusive hyperbole, from man to man, is truly eccentric," said he. "He can never be a permanent inmate in any family; how is he borne in society?"

"He is suffered rather than received," said Sidney. "A few, a very few, I trust, are disposed to think him harmless. To me his eloquence is the most offensive insolence; and were he not too contemptible, I should tell him so."

"Really you are very ungracious," said Miss Parsloe; "he is a man of acknowledged genius, has seen a great deal of life, and knows how to apply himself to the foibles of his associates."

"I agree with your last remark," said Sidney; "he is an adroit quack, and ministers to *his* patients with *some* judgment. I am not one of them; whatever are my foibles, he has not been successful; his *anodynes* irritate

ritate in place of soothing me; thus you see he is fallible."

"Aye, you, as Weybridge says, you are an oddity, a pattern man; you will be deserted in a year or two, shunned as a monster of excellence," and tapping our hero with her fan, she quitted her seat, and joined lady Tadcaster.

"That lady is a warm defender in a bad cause," said the colonel. "I suppose she is a very distinguished fashionable."

At this juncture the smiling Cowslip made her appearance, and throwing herself upon a seat by our hero, she played off a thousand attitudes, all equally meant to charm. "How singular it looks to see you sit still all the evening!" said she; "I declare, Mr. Wentworth, the girls are laughing at you; Miss Parsloe has just been describing you to Mrs. Tibbits with such humour, that I was forced to join her. Pray forgive me—I am a great rattle," and she threw a supplicating glance towards our hero.

"Most

"Most sincerely do I forgive your ladyship, Miss Parsloe, and all the laughter-loving ladies who honour me by their remembrance. I seldom dance, having little gratification in the exertion. This lady," and he bowed to Amelia, "has declined my hand, and I have made up my mind to look on for the rest of the evening."

"Indeed!" said lady Charlotte, proudly. "I suppose you have forgot your dancing," she added, addressing Amelia, "or you would not have refused Mr. Wentworth."

"Not absolutely forgotten how to dance," said Amelia, smiling; "but I was not willing to tax Mr. Wentworth with a partner, who could not exert herself to pursue it with attention."

"La! I should like to see you *exhibit*," resumed lady Charlotte, sarcastically; "it would be quite amusing."

"Miss Sidney, I will take upon me to assert, is no exhibitionest," said Wentworth, warmly; "your ladyship must be jesting."

 "Why

"Why do you know Miss Sidney, our governess?"

"I have had the honour of seeing Miss Sidney many times," replied our hero, "consequently I speak from conviction."

"I wonder she never said she knew you," resumed lady Charlotte, poutingly; "why were you so sly, ma'am?"

"Your ladyship's interest in what relates to myself or my concerns is not always so lively," said Amelia, half-smiling; "I am not prone to speak on subjects which are not excited by your inquiry."

Wentworth regarded the countenance of our heroine attentively. Did she consider his friendship with esteem? or was she desirous to treat the matter lightly, in order to repress any hope he might entertain of her favour? Although Sidney accounted himself a physiognomist, he made no discovery in the present instance—Amelia's reply was made with animation, and, in idea, he was dissecting the heart instead of the features: could she, if not perfect-

ly

ly indifferent, have answered thus? Again, *had* she betrayed a feeling which could flatter his vanity, how incautiously, on what transient and trivial attentions must she have founded her preference? his own unguarded warmth, when entreating her return to the ball-room, escaped his memory—so true it is, a really delicate man contemns an unsought heart. The reign of woman, under the happiest auspices, is comparatively short; she is frequently deposed, even by the man who has professed himself her slave—shut out from his affections—a stranger to his mind; and this too from the creature who has vowed to protect her "in sickness and in health." If such are the tricks of passion, who would barter their peace to *external* advantages only?—take a heart upon credit, without a knowledge of its principles? In the most trivial circumstances of our lives, there is always some thought given to the *future;* while the most important decision—the compact which is to end with our being,

is scarcely *considered*, until an escape from its contingent consequences is inevitable.

This digression, like a solecism in language, must grate on the ear of an *animated fascinating* devotee of fashion. Trace causes, ye pleasure-loving slaves; you hold the mirror, and if the *reflection* displeases, break the glass, nor see yourselves so darkly. Marriage is your aim, and when ye attain the *settlement*, your *bondage* is the commencement of your *liberty*;—it is a land of *liberty*, and *Englishwomen* avail themselves of the privilege.

Not one of ye, however offended by my boldness, could elicit more elegant scorn on the occasion, than would the lady-hostess of our ball, had she been forced to attend to my impertinent prosing; nor should we wonder that the qualities which make *reason* an inefficient refuge, find security in the torpescent incense of flattery.

"Mr. Wentworth," said lady Tadcaster, "I have been arraigning your taste—how could you suffer sir George Beverly to win that

that lovely girl? positively she is the finest woman I ever beheld."

"Is lady Beverly here?" said Sidney, rising.

"Yes. Well, you are like all your sex—she will claim your homage, now she is a wife."

Sidney, waving his hand, quitted lady Tadcaster, and hastened to seek his cousin.

Our heroine gazed after Wentworth, with an interest she scarcely understood. She had experienced some painful sensations from the various and unequal notice to which she had been exposed during the evening; yet the numberless interventions of Wentworth, the unfeigned liberality with which he repelled the taunts of her more elevated associates, were grateful tributes to her feelings; and it is so natural for the weak to place confidence in the powerful, that the absence of our hero seemed to leave the dependant alone, though surrounded by a little world of fashion. A very short time had elapsed when Amelia beheld the run-

away approaching, accompanied by lady Morbury and his cousin. Ere she had time to contemplate the lovely countenance of lady Beverly, Wentworth led her ladyship to Amelia, and with a manner the most conciliating, uttered a more than fashionable introduction.

Mere courtesy would have met from our orphan the calm return it ever demands; but, in the pointed and persuasive language of Sidney, there was something so much above common forms, such an evident desire of giving distinction to the dependant, that, overcome by her feelings, she could only reply by accepting the offered hand of lady Beverly, her eyes swimming in tears.

Lady Morbury saw the agitation of her *eléve;* and taking the other hand of Amelia—"Come, my dear," said she, "let us walk. You will find lady Beverly is not a very formidable personage; throw off this dejection, she is prepared to esteem you."

"You are very good, madam," said Amelia; "it is the kindness, the consideration

deration of lady Beverly which prevents me from making my acknowledgments, though I feel the distinction most sensibly."

"I am quite the pupil of Mr. Wentworth," said lady Beverly; "he has always directed my friendships; and I feel a presentiment the present will not prove the least of my obligations."

"To Mr. Wentworth's liberality, I am deeply indebted," said Amelia, in a faltering voice; "it is more than generous—it is humane."

"I will not allow this," continued the animated Grace, in a half whisper; "men of honour are the natural guardians of the innocent; you owe him no gratitude; he would have forgotten himself, had he not discerned your merit. Lady Anna Arlingham is your sincere friend; she has not been as explicit as I could wish; for I am a very woman, and sanguine in all my projects; but she referred me to Went-

worth;—have I your permission to be inquisitive?—is he in your confidence?"

"No indeed!" said Amelia, in a hurried accent; "your ladyship must be mistaken.—I have few concealments, and those which I regret are imposed upon me by friends I have ever obeyed. Your ladyship must forgive me if I add, my acquaintance with Mr. Wentworth, however perfect his character, could never lead me to confide my disappointments to his keeping."

"You are perfectly right; male confidants are not to my taste. Lady Anna must have mistaken Wentworth."

Amelia looked her surprise.—"Surely he had not asserted such a thing?" and, in her alarm, she directed her eyes towards Sidney, with an expression of anxiety and regret.

"What is the nature of this confabulation?" said he, displacing lady Beverly, and taking the arm of her companion; "may

"may I be admitted into the baby-house?"

"Miss Sidney is of my opinion," said lady Beverly; "she does not approve of male confidants. What say you, Sid?"

"Why I believe we are not all equal to the trust. There is only *one* era in the life of woman which should make her unreserved; he who dispenses with this is like an inferior actor, who plays his part without comprehending his author. For myself, I own I am saucy; I should expect to find a heart open as day to my anxious inquiry—simple as innocence and truth could make it—and so communicative, that, while it gave dates to my progress in its regards, my honest pride should grow upon the record."

"What a sublime enthusiast! Sidney, you have done well to bring pride into the compact," said lady Beverly; "it is absolute vanity; and how far you have strayed from the subject!—you must be caught: tell me, where is the fair damsel who

who is to be so wondrous complying? and what will you owe a creature who so far forgets that dignity which keeps your encroaching sex at a distance?"

"My eternal gratitude—my undivided love, *must* be given to *such* a woman," said Wentworth, with animation; "nor will she step out of her path in conceding to my (perhaps whimsical) ideas. You are right in saying I have 'embodied the thought.' I *think* I have seen the woman—nay, more, I will, ere long, learn if I have any thing to hope."

At this moment *hope* seemed to desert the bosom of Amelia; she leaned on the arm of our Englishman, and her trembling frame needed his support; but as if she was intruding on a man who was devoted to some imperious charmer, she gently withdrew her hand. Wentworth missed the soft treasure—he turned his eyes toward the agitated girl; a feeling of conscious hope stole to his heart. Again, replacing the trembling arm, he pressed it to

his

his bosom, his tongue was chained, and lady Beverly, to whom the passing scene was new and attractive, was happily excluded from observing the confusion of her companions.

"Is it lady Charlotte or lady Maria?" asked the laughing Grace, resuming her inquiries.

"Neither," said Wentworth. "I allow lady Maria to be a lovely girl, of chaste manners; lady Charlotte is a character—I hate characters."

"Miss Parsloe then, or Mrs. Marnley, or Miss Macleod, or lady Di Fenning?—you saw how she excelled in waltzing just now."

"Ridiculous!" said Sidney; "I would as soon marry the devil as a waltzing woman!" and recovering himself, he apologized for the strength of his expression.

"My dear Sid, if love makes you so petulant and *polite*, pray get married, that we may see you yourself again."

Just at this moment the colonel ad-

vanced,

vanced, and, with an urbanity which gave dignity to his martial figure, took leave of Amelia and our hero.—" You will not set me easy on the subject I named?" said he, addressing Amelia.

" If it is possible, sir, I will; you may rely on my endeavouring to make it practicable."

" Enough," said he; " I shall pay my respects in Grosvenor-place immediately after my return;" and, bowing with cordiality, he retired.

" Who is that gentleman?" asked Wentworth. " I have not heard his name."

" He is a friend of general Dalton's," said Amelia, " just arrived from India; I think I heard lady Tadcaster call him colonel Renny."

" You have certainly made a conquest of the nabob," said lady Beverly, smiling.

" The colonel was a perfect stranger to me till this evening," replied our heroine. " He does me the honour of thinking my residence with lady Tadcaster would be pleasing

pleasing to the general, and he wishes me to remain a few months longer with the ladies Dalton."

"You will not sacrifice your time in such an irksome way," said lady Beverly; "give it up, by all means. I do not mean to say that the task of tuition may not, in some cases, be pleasant, but, with girls so far advanced, I can imagine a thousand incompatible views and expectations are afloat; and, indeed, my short acquaintance with lady Tadcaster leads me to think she is not the most conciliating directress."

Amelia bowed to the justice of lady Beverly's remarks, yet she could not fashion her tongue to say that it was convenient she should not quit her present asylum, for, alas! the same deplorable exclusion attached to her fate; she had no home, save the protection of the Hopkinses; and for reasons which my readers will comprehend, she resolved to avoid a second residence in that family, unless driven thither by unavoidable necessity.

Lady

Lady Beverly, whose warm heart was not only alive to friendship, but active in effecting the happiness of all who required her countenance, beheld the embarrassment of Amelia with intelligent sympathy.

"Can you spare half an hour to me to-morrow morning?" said she. "I have an idea which I wish to submit to your consideration."

Our heroine acquiesced, fixing two o'clock on the ensuing day. Wentworth, whose attention to his fair companions made him partially acquainted with their arrangement, acquired new spirits, as he saw his favourite gaining on the esteem of the generous lady Beverly. He entered into a minute criticism of the passing scene, dissecting the motives which brought so large an assemblage together.—"This would be termed a social party," continued he, in his closing remark; "look around you; is there any thing like concord? what desultory chit-chat! and the ladies, my dear Grace, forgive me, but really, their looks askance, how evidently

evidently directed at the dress, in place of the person! not one fair creature but could give you an exact description of the individual costume."

"Such a word from Mr. Wentworth," said Miss Macleod, making a stand before our hero and his companions. "Do listen, my dear Marnley! he is descending from his stoic-like indifference to common things."

Mrs. Marnley, tittering, declared that Mr. Wentworth's taste was so correct, it would be a general advantage to the ladies if he had really resolved upon disseminating his opinions.

"The attempt would be absurd," said Sidney; "your love of novelty would exhaust my genius, and *I* should be out of fashion ere my name was established."

"How he delights to teaze us!" said the widow, addressing lady Beverly; "is he not very provoking? Dear me, I beg pardon, Miss Sidney," she added, "really I did not see you; I hope you are well, ma'am?"

Amelia

Amelia replied in the affirmative.

"I have gone through a world of fatigue to-day," said the babbling Clara; "positively I did not think I should be able to look in upon dear lady Tadcaster."

"A London life, if fashionably followed, must indeed be a very fatiguing one," said lady Beverly; "actually requiring great strength of body as well as spirits to carry one through it."

"That is an error which you non-residents imbibe; my frame is infinitely delicate, yet my zeal, and the warmth of my friendships, make *me* equal to the exertion."

"Much depends upon habit," replied lady Beverly; "I am fully persuaded I shall never pursue the system, in its present unlimited extent. I would not venture my health, nor sacrifice my time to a decidedly fashionable routine."

"You are new to society, my dear lady Beverly; in a little time we shall see you drop these rustic ideas—not if you suffer

Mr.

Mr. Wentworth to cater for you;—he is a nonpareil—quite a wonder! we laugh at him, I assure you."

"I will compound for the smiles of the ladies, so I never fall under their frowns," said Sidney: "but to illustrate what zeal and friendship can effect, when coupled with a delicate frame, pray give lady Beverly a schedule of this one day of fatigue—it will be information to a rustic like my young novice."

"I know your motive, Mr. Wentworth—you were always disposed to quizzing; but I do not mind you *now*. There was a time, my dear lady Beverly, when this creature's opinions would absolutely shape my plans, and make me reject what I had approved; *now* I contemn my silly credulity; he has no sociality in his nature, and would willingly obtrude his gloomy feelings on the world at large. Now, to astonish your precise notions—I rode for an hour before breakfast—took a peep at West's picture—attended the rehearsal of

ancient

ancient music—made twenty calls—dined out—went to the Opera for half an hour—from thence to the duchess of ——'s party—made my curtsey at lady Maudlin's, gladly quitting her empty rooms to tell my dear lady Tadcaster how superior she is in all that relates to elegance: will this do?"

"So much for the warmth of friendship," said Sidney, laughing. "I perceive lady Maudlin is one of your favourites."

"A favourite! good Heavens, Mr. Wentworth, she is my aversion; the most ridiculous creature in existence;—though really I pity her, she has been at great expence lately in fitting up her house, to bring out her girls with *eclat*; to be sure they have been hiding for the last three years—yet she was perhaps right; she knew the time was approaching when she must draw her purse, and we all know it is not too long."

"This is zeal for the absent," resumed Sidney. "*Labial* fatigue is a rare weakness with woman."

"I am gone," said Mrs. Marnley. "You are

are incorrigibly impertinent," and taking the arm of Miss Macleod, she passed on.

"Your widow is a prominent sort of character," said lady Beverly; "what would my uncle think of her?"

"That she is volatile, and consequently unthinking," said Sidney, in a low voice. "Call her not *my* widow—the association is inconsistent, and by no means grateful to my feelings."

"Was not Wentworth a flirt of Mrs. Marnley's?" asked lady Beverly of Amelia. "Be honest—I know I am right."

"I cannot reply to your ladyship," said our heroine. "I believe Mr. Wentworth was a friend of Mr. Marnley's, at least I have heard Mrs. Marnley speak of him as such."

The arrival of lord Osterly and Supple spared Amelia from further explanation. "What a famous squeeze we have had!" said my lord; "I thought we should have demolished the dairy. Pray why is Weybridge allowed such privileges here?" he continued,

continued, addressing Amelia; "it is not fair;—is lady Charlotte his mistress?"

"Lord Weybridge's relationship gives him an access which no acquaintance could assume," said Amelia.

"Aye, that's true; but I hate to be shut out in these cases—it is mortifying."

"You must endeavour to bear mortifications with fortitude, my lord," said lady Beverly, "and this is not so irremediable a grievance—lady Maria is equally handsome with her sister."

"She is tame—I hate tame women! Ah! there's Liffington—this is fortunate! What style the fellow has!" he continued, directing our hero to regard the object of his commendation; "did you ever see a coat so well cut? observe the back—what a fit!—he's a devilish clever fellow!"

"I think you give praise where it is not due," said Sidney; "the *tailor* has the merit in this item."

"He is the designer," continued my lord, drawing a bottle of lavender from his pocket,

pocket, and pouring the fragrant liquid on his fingers, he *laved* his *whiskers* alternately, evidently wishing to vie with Mr. Liffington in this important point.

"My lord," said Supple, "shall we speak with Mr. Liffington on the subject of the drama?"

"Aye, that's right—I will do so presently. You must know, I want a few hints from him: I have an idea of arranging a popular story for the stage;—he has been so successful, he may be serviceable to me. He is a charming author!"

"I know he has dramatized a few nursery tales," said Wentworth: "if such attempts can make a man an author, Mr. Liffington is one."

"Mr. Liffington has some taste, sir," said Supple; "but lord Osterly is infinitely better calculated to catch the public favour. You never saw my lord's poetry—he possesses the *vivida vis animæ*, in a great degree. I should be much disappointed if he did not eclipse all our modern poets."

"Indeed, sir! pray, my lord, if not impertinent, may I ask what is the subject of your intended drama?"

"Why its hardly a fair question, Wentworth. I own I was vexed to find my *original* idea anticipated—a hideous *minor* theatre has brought out 'Little Red Riding-hood.' I had arranged my plan, and made some progress in the first act, when the *Post* quashed my project."

Wentworth could not conceal the risibility this explanation excited.—"Pardon me, my lord, I must laugh; though I think there is yet ample scope for your talent. Shall we recall the nursery legends to your memory? what say ye to 'Cock Robin,' 'Puss in Boots,' or 'Margery Two-shoes?"

"Or 'Whittington and his Cat,'" said lady Beverly.

"Upon my soul," said the peer, "I wish it had been 'Whittington and his Horse;' Kemble would have got it up with appropriate magnificence. Pageantry is the order

der of the day—the quadrupeds beat the bipeds hollow."

"Or rather the hollowness of our taste leads us to substitute show for sense," said Sidney. "It is a sort of dotage at which I have not yet arrived; nor am I satisfied with the avowal that these spectacles are brought out at an expence so exorbitant, that the manager deserves remuneration. We are a people who seek diversion habitually, and though we do not always pursue the most probable sources of information in our love of novelty, I cannot believe we should be disappointed at finding our intellectual faculties called into action, in place of being treated as children."

"You are of the old school, Wentworth; the public voice is against you," said lord Osterly. "Who is it says—

> "The nurse's legends are for truths received,
> And the *man* dreams but what the *boy* believed?"

"I remember the lines, though not the author," replied Sidney. "The waking

dreams now offered to our puerile tastes, are indeed but the revision of our juvenile feelings; I should not wonder to see rattles and go-carts introduced for our entertainment."

"I will defend the system," said my lord. "Has not an eloquent and superior judge of the scenic art asserted that our present spectacles are the effects of 'an advanced state of society?"

"He has; and *I* understand his definition in any other sense than a flattering one. He likewise says, 'the vitiated minds of the higher orders incapacitates them to relish more refined amusements.' I know such mummery will find defenders."

"Men *espouse* the well-endowed opinions in fashion, and *then* seek arguments either to make good their beauty, or varnish over their deformity." The approach of Mr. Liffington called the attention of lord Osterly, and while *he* scrutinized the costume of this distinguished character, lady Beverly, with a smile, inquired if the

author

author ever personified the character he drew?

"Why do you ask this question?" said Sidney, in a low voice.

"He *seems made* up for stage effect," said the laughing Grace.

"Lady John has been tutoring you," replied Wentworth; "I fear your satire is just, yet I blush to own it."

"Excess-ve warm; ve-y full to-night," said Mr. Liffington; "charm-ng scen-ry—delightf-l p-rsp-ct-ve."

Lady Beverly bowed to the unintelligible jargon.

"Mr. Went-orth, your plac-dity surpr-ses me; what a calm temp-rament!—'tis env-ble—quite a stoic."

"You flatter me," said Sidney, smiling; "I do not own the portrait. I brought cheerful spirits into this assembly, and nothing that I have witnessed since could diminish the possession."

"Ve-y just; the invention is quick-ned by happy spir-ts; mine are sad truants—

 they

they often fail me," said the abbreviating beau. "Osterly," he continued, "I've an idea," and taking the arm of the aspiring peer, he led him away.

"What an eccentric creature!" said lady Beverly.

"He is odd," replied Wentworth; "yet I hear him well spoken of in many essential points: this is perhaps the worst apology we can offer for his prominent singularities. Every age, however, has its striking figures, which stand out upon the canvass, and catch the eye of the observer. They are too glaring to *last*; a beau becomes an *antique* in figure long before time has dated his decline; his vanity may survive his fame—but the *world* takes no account of him."

"I wonder that men can be satisfied with the mere countenance of women," said Amelia. "No well-educated or amiable man but is, I believe, gratified by their approbation; yet to live only in the little sphere of their invention, is a weak,

and,

and, in my mind, a degrading waste of life."

"I dare concur with you," said Sidney; "and it is a bold assertion, in such a presence, where a man might be excused if he forgot there was a more extensive scene which claims his consideration and his care. Yet I know not that your policy does not direct your judgment in this case," said he, gazing on the timid Amelia. "You understand us better than we do ourselves—temporary separations give new charms to love."

"Personal again!" said lady Beverly. "My dear Sid, we were speaking of *general* habits, general conduct; your embodied thought is a most intrusive feeling—it quite overpowers *our* eloquence, for observe, I was on the point of eliciting a remark almost as pertinent as that of Miss Sidney's."

"Continue to think alike," said Wentworth, "and I will endeavour to prove—" and he hesitated.

"The proof, Sidney, the proof?" said lady Beverly.

"That an individual preference shall not materially diminish the claims of natural affection—of consanguinity."

Though our hero sustained two of the fairest arms that ever leaned on man for support, it is certain there was a visible pressure on the left side. Amelia knew not how to understand the distinction—could she term it one? There was a mixture of ambiguity in the manner of Wentworth. Yet she knew there were subtleties attached to love, which made its votaries unequal, at times. The heart has been erroneously stated as seated on this side; I believe the anatomist has decided otherwise; be that as it may, when it *leans*, it will be understood; and whether it is silent or eloquent, the natural facility of woman makes her quick at comprehending its meaning. While I allow this, I would premise that there are various ways of translating a preference; some view it with fear

fear of its stability; others with a conscious belief in their right to the homage; while a third, and not the least deserving class, own all the grateful delight which a *virtuous* preference bestows, yet are too susceptibly alive to sympathy, to trust the timid mind to repose on its most ardent hopes.

It was in vain lady Beverly attacked the half-explicit Wentworth; all her raillery was received with cheerfulness. The harmony of *his* spirits was encreased by the evident embarrassment of Amelia; he beheld in it all that he valued—it was genuine modesty, a natural candour of disposition, which made her unequal to that exertion of power which women usually observe towards the man who avows himself captivated. Had not Wentworth's character been diametrically opposite to that which Mr. Liffington had termed it—had he not been sanguine in the extreme, he could not possibly have decided so suddenly, as if a woman of real delicacy could be gratified by inuendoes. Had his vanity gone back

to the little kindnesses and distinctions he had shewn the dependant, it is possible he might have found a scite for his present castle-building; but the moment in hand is the bliss of the enthusiast; and if the period is not stained by error—if the subsequent hour gives him no cause to blush for that which has passed into the record of time, who would abridge his short-lived joys, or bid him woo the clouds that hover over poor mortality?

Happily for the inventors of splendid entertainments, the diversity of feelings brought into their circle is as multifarious as their fancies could suggest. Though an unanimous expression of admiration had been given to the delicate viands displayed at lady Tadcaster's supper, and *substantial* proofs of its excellence exhibited, it would have amused an *unfashionable* observer, had he or she heard the bye conversation, uttered in half-whispers round the circular tables.

"Only look at old Tibbits," said Miss Parsloe;

Parsloe; "what a cormorant!—positively she has been ejected from two or three boarding-houses I could name. Don't you think lady Tadcaster has an eye upon Wentworth for lady Charlotte?" she continued, addressing a very dear friend who sat at her elbow. "It wont take, I am certain, he is such a quiz. *Entre nous*, Charlotte is a little forward, I think. Besides, we all know how he stands with the widow. What a creature Macleod looks to-night! she has not worn any thing but that faded crape dress all the season."

"Her poverty, and not her will, consents," replied the assimilating friend; "she would dress better if she could."

To enumerate all the amiable sarcasms directed at the unconscious parties, would be impossible. Lady Beverly's complexion was pronounced a purchased one, her manners odiously rustic; while her attention to our heroine was termed an affectation of singularity; and the poor Amelia—she was a sentimental Miss, whose *melancholy* vá-

nity was evident in the expression of her eyes;—" She knows they are good," said Miss Parsloe, " and is always casting them down with a look of humility—I despise such hypocrites! Osterly has been stunning me with his encomiums on this girl: yes, really the creature declared just now she was the finest woman in the room; and he is wondering how he could see her so often, and not make the discovery till to-night."

" Lady Tadcaster is wrong—excessively silly, in retaining such a personable young woman with her nieces," said the wary Mrs. Hewitson; " such a man as Wentworth, whose eccentric notions are well known; he is just the creature who would delight in raising a moral Miss like that into notice."

" La, you cannot be serious!" said Miss Parsloe; " he is one of the proudest men I know; one can scarcely get a word from him;—I quite dislike him, though I allow he is excessively handsome."

Supple,

Supple, who acted the part of an adroit attendant, caught the name of our hero; with an affected shrug, he bade the fair reviler be circumspect in expressing her dislike;—"You will be suspected," said he; "Mr. Wentworth is such a general favourite with the ladies, you must be cautious, madam."

"I hate caution," said Miss Parsloe, "and would publish to the world how much I dislike an affected moralist."

"You are, perhaps, right in your last remark, my dear madam, but the assumption is of too long standing, to be done away by an individual voice;—time will shew," said Supple.

"Dear me, you are the gentleman we overtook on the road," replied Miss Parsloe; "pray can you tell me if the man died who fell from the stage-coach?"

"He lives," said Supple; "my amiable friend, lord Osterly, remained to see all possible comfort afforded the sufferer, ere

he

he quitted the inn. I have no doubt he will do well."

"That was very good of my lord; really I am so nervous—shocking sights affect me so deeply, that I begged lady Fenning not to stop to see the event; and indeed we had no time to spare—there was only one intervening day between that and lady Tadcaster's ball, so you see it would have been impossible for us to remain."

"You did right," said Supple; "the nerves of women are not equal to such scenes."

"Supple," said lord Osterly, laying his hand on the shoulder of his satellite, "she is so devilish reserved, and so much engaged by Wentworth, I cannot catch her attention for a moment."

"Be patient, my lord; to-morrow, I promise you, to-morrow shall put a new face upon things."

"To-morrow!" said lord Weybridge, advancing

vancing with a theatrical air; "methought I heard Horatio say to-morrow!"

"'Tis come, my lord," said Supple; "see how the morning breaks," and he pointed towards the windows, through which the stealing light of day was faintly beaming.

Lady Tadcaster would have arrested the intruding harbinger, had she possessed the power. "Fie, my lord," said the wakeful votary of dissipation; "who heeds time, where Beauty holds her vigils? let us to the ball-room," and leading the way, the fairy round was again commenced by a great proportion of the company. Waltzing *before* supper had called forth the disapprobation of our moral Englishman; but waltzing *after* supper was almost *another* species of impropriety. "Mothers, husbands, brothers, lovers, what are ye?" asked Wentworth, internally; "ye have each a prerogative—each an interest in the conduct of these improvident creatures. Why do you slumber? by Heaven, I could tell

all

all these actors what I think of them, if I could spare the modest seceders from notoriety, while I vented my indignation."

Amelia and lady Beverly regarded each other with a silent though intelligent expression. "I am really fatigued," said her ladyship; "do tell Beverly I wish he would order the carriage."

"It is time you retired," said Sidney, as he departed to execute the command of his kinswoman.

"Are we fastidious?" said lady Beverly to Amelia. "I confess, my woman's vanity is pained by the various exhibitions I have witnessed to-night; it is true, I am a stranger to fashionable license, but to me there seems no line of demarkation. Without affectation or prudery, there is certainly a decorum which is necessary to be observed in all mixed parties; but these *waltzing* ladies must never entertain a hope of repelling the *subsequent* advances of the man with whom they have been thus familiar."

"I am

"I am surprised to see them so generally adopted here," said Amelia; "and indeed they have chosen the very worst species of waltz; I have seen them danced with some grace, though they would never suit my taste;—the present is the style used only by the peasants and lower orders in Germany."

"We never take up a folly in this great nation, without endeavouring to pursue it to its climax," said lady Beverly; "I trust our next effort will bear a tendency less dangerous. The most trivial diminution in a woman's *personal* dignity, places her *mind* at the mercy of the other sex; and though I believe a few men might be found who have no sinister motive in assisting to make them conspicuous, I must think there are numbers whose principles would not bear so lenient an interpretation."

"The women are certainly the more erring party," replied Amelia. "There are instances and occasions in which one would concede one's own opinion, rather than ar-

gue

gue a point with indifferent persons; but in this particular, resistance is only common propriety: the world combined should not make me yield my sentiments, where my own approbation was so essentially concerned."

"You are perfectly right," said lady Beverly, regarding the countenance of the animated speaker; "I cannot comprehend the worth of that character which so readily conforms to prominent foibles; yet I know such people are well considered—called amiable, plastic dispositions, &c."

"Gentleness of character is an indefinable charm in our sex," replied our heroine; "may I venture to add, that a generally acquiescent character must be a very weak one: it is impossible that the *general* appeals to our reason can be *equally* worthy of our concurrence. Friendship must languish, if all alike excited our zeal, or won our sympathy—there must be *distinctions* to make life valuable; and those who have not sufficient command of themselves

to

to reject the uncongenial associate, can scarcely possess the discernment to make a judicious election."

Lady Beverly, whose features possessed not more beauty than archness, looked towards Amelia.—" You are a dear little casuist," said she; " quite a Wentworth. You carry your reasoning faculties so meekly, that one might be betrayed into friendship, without knowing the force of your character. I regret Sidney has lost this interesting confab—you are not angry ?" and she held out her hand to the blushing Amelia.

" Your ladyship mistakes my disposition," said our heroine; " I am highly flattered by your kindness, though a little overpowered by praises which I do not deserve."

" Praise !" said lady Beverly. " Surely you are dull, my dear; I merely compared you with my bachelor coz, and *that* could not be accounted a compliment."

" Indeed, I think—I believe I misunderstood

stood your ladyship," replied Amelia, crimsoning with confusion; "you must forgive my error."

"You are forgiven," said lady Beverly, with a smile of cordial approbation. "Here comes Wentworth—to-morrow, at two, you will receive me?"

"Certainly, madam," said Amelia.

"You will find Beverly on the *stairs*," said Wentworth; "he will join you *en passant*."

"On the stairs!" said the unfashionable Grace.

"Yes," said Sidney; "it is one of our whims just now—you will see he is not singular. Come," continued Wentworth, taking the hand of Amelia, "you must be tired—let me conduct you." Our heroine paused; she knew not how her departure might affect lady Tadcaster: casting a look around her, she saw her pupils were engaged—lady Charlotte in flirting with lord Osterly, and lady Maria seated by Mrs. Tibbits; it was a venture, yet the proposal

was

was in unison with her wish, and she retired, led by Wentworth.

"Good-night," said lady Beverly; "remember two."

Amelia curtsied her assent.

"Place the word *personally*," said Wentworth, pressing the hand he detained, "and think of *two* who esteem, who—good-night," he added, and caught the arm of lady Beverly.

"What a strange situation!" said her ladyship, pausing on the stairs, as she beheld a number of females seated on them, and a few of the beaux leaning against the entwined laurel which ornamented the staircase.

"You cling to the laurel," said Sidney, smiling at lord Weybridge; "what say you, my lord, would you not rather wear the honourable wreath?"

"It must be purchased at such a risk," said the peer, "that my head might not survive to bear the distinction."

"But

"But your fame," replied Sidney; "that might be deathless."

"Aye, it might, and it might not," said lord Weybridge. "No, quiz me if there is anything like old England—*terra firma*, all sure. I should not hesitate to make one campaign in the Peninsula, if I could be certain of bringing home a good stud of the Spanish breed; but in this there is much risk; if one comes off in a *hurry*, why you must ship the bipeds before the quadrupeds in these cases—so there's no certainty; besides those boring court martials—there is always a *chance* of being hauled over the coals:—no, hang it, I am shy of the army."

"You will find comfort, while there are stone staircases and laurel pallisades," said Sidney; "but you forgive the *managers* in the instance you name, my lord; the *bipeds* have certainly a superior claim to protection."

"Why yes, I suppose we must say so; though

though the population of this country is immense, and war is a necessary evil."

"If it were abridged by all of your squad," thought Wentworth, "where would be the loss?"

"Hallo, Wentworth!" vociferated the peer; "Liffington has actually torn a sprig from the branch—what say you to this?"

"It is a *magic* wreath, no doubt," said Sidney, in reply; "but not an evergreen," he added. "*His* laurels must be exotic—extorted from the hot-bed of flattery, and perishable as the *subject* which cherished them;" and jumping into the carriage, he left his character in the hands of the gentry of the *front stairs.* How it was handled, it is unnecessary to explain.

The bright beams of morning now glowed through the apartments; those devices which had excited such superabundant admiration now appeared the most insignificant structures imaginable; the dairy, that futile snare of the designing hostess, like her hopes, seemed tottering to decay; and the

the company—may I proceed? alas! how pallid looked those cheeks on which the roseate bloom of *art* had so recently been seen! The light of day, the vivifying breath of morn, reanimates creative nature;—not so the artificial bloom revives; it sickens beneath the sun's effulgence. The hypocrite is *internally* discomfited when he stands in the presence of a generous mind; he feels his littleness, and shrinks from its penetration; and though custom and precedent gives currency to artificial charms, the *natural* face will find admirers: fashionable women would deny the fact, yet their apostacy may be doubted; fatigue is an attendant on their butterfly lives, consequently a diminution of exertion would be desirable; and though a natural complexion is sometimes *ridiculed* or *doubted*, the labour and expence to which you put yourselves as imitators, sufficiently explain you secretly approve what you malevolently depreciate. If advice were not presumptuous in an author, I should be tempted to say—"Order

your carriages early, and retire while yet the exotics retain their short-lived luxuriance." I know you might reply, we can renew them at pleasure; I allow this—but until some Lethean charm can be devised for your *observers*, memory will revert to these *day-light* exhibitions, and, like Miss Parsloe's crape dress, they will pall the eye.

## CHAP. III.

"How could my tongue
Take pleasure and be lavish in thy praise?
How could I speak thy nobleness of nature?—
Thy open manly heart?
Thou art the man in whom my soul delights—
In whom, next Heav'n, I trust."

The duty of servants to their employers is a knowledge which the least intellectual being imagines he possesses; his power to *remunerate* these humble dependants gives him, as he vainly believes, a right over their actions, that is, if he loves authority; but where the household of a man is established on principles of fellowship—if, whence he *expects* assiduity he bestows *consideration*, they are no longer common hirelings;

hirelings; their inferior capacities may require his conciliating direction, but the "yoke sits easy, for the burthen is light."

The departure of Hall left the mansion of Wentworth wholly to the care of women; Sidney felt the inconvenience to which his dissipation would subject them; and as his housekeeper admitted him on his return from lady Tadcaster's, he apologized to Mrs. Millar for the trouble he gave her.

"It is a pleasure, sir," said the good woman; "I am only sorry to think Philip ar'nt come---som'art must a happened him, he's such a good lad."

"I am really alarmed for him," said Sidney; "Hall never appeared friendly towards him. Can you give me any idea of his connexions?"

"No, sir, I cannot say anything of his friends—he was always shy; but, somehow, I think that the soldier who called this morning had something to say about him."

"What soldier?" asked Wentworth.

 "Why

"Why a pensioner from Chelsea, I think he is, by his clothes;—he said he called yesterday, but the butler said you could not be seen."

"Why did not you admit him?" said Sidney.

"You were out, sir, and he said he would come again to-morrow."

"I will wait his arrival," replied Wentworth; "be sure and detain him;" and retiring to his pillow, he forgot the immediate subject which had engaged his attention, and, in a revision of the evening's entertainment, found one which engrossed his imagination, and soothed his dreams.

Though a votary of fashion is seldom depicted as *suffering* from his willing thraldom, Wentworth, who had visited Adderfield for the purpose of regaining his health, had, in the subsequent motives which caused his return, in a manner forgotten that he required a respite from the attenuating system. A man may be quick-sighted in discerning the injurious from the

the simple acquiescences to received habits, and yet be a very imperfect actor on the defensive side.

The society of women ever owned charms with him; and with a heart invulnerable to puerile shafts, he entered their circle, for the mere purpose of *amusement;* —it was a sorry compliment, we own—one that would not bear a man out, if it was a system he resolved to pursue unconditionally: but Wentworth was a projector—one whose views scarcely deserved censure, though the warmth of his manner sometimes betrayed him into inadvertencies.

Such various and unsatisfactory reasons unite the greater proportion of married couples;—interest, under the form of money or connexion—pride, under the mask of disinterestedness—selfishness, so frequently induces men and women to *raise* the creature they prefer, and the act passes as one that deserves commendation; it would bear another term—I hate the

word, and will not stain my paper by its admission.

Whatever were the projects of our hero, he had hitherto passed through the vortex heart-whole: Amelia crossed his path; young, amiable, and unprotected, he became her admirer—he defended her from the insults of his own sex, and the slights of the women. We have, in more than one place, recorded his manner on these occasions; with some of my readers it may appear a sort of whimsical knight-errantry—with others it may find favour: he was not sorry that the new interest excited in his bosom was created by a woman, whose appearance and mind were suited to the station he could give her in society.—"No," said our hero, as he reflected on the object of his regards, "if her moral excellence but equal her external graces, I should own myself fortunate in attaining her. You fortunate country maids, or menials ennobled, are these metamorphoses the effect of love? impossible! I would as soon

soon give my vows to a statue, as to the creature who wanted the charm of mind."

A multiplicity of business is allowed to have a sensible effect on the spirits of man, and a combination of hopes and fears, not unmixed by doubts, may very reasonably subject an independant man to mental disquietude. Wentworth loved; he *trusted* he had no room for *doubts*—his *fears* were formidable, for should his mistress return his affection, the concurrence of his father would be an indispensible seal to his happiness. To him such an assent appeared the most fortuitous coincidence possible. Fate, in making the orphan of Anna Tracey the object of his love, would give sir Ormsby a noble opportunity of burying the past in oblivion; and this at the incalculable advantage of confirming the happiness of a son he had ever considered with the tenderest parental regard. Sidney had carried his project thus far, without reckoning upon a most essential premise—namely, the *undivided* love of his enslaver.

 —"The

—"'The rich plunder of a taken heart'—this must be mine!" said Wentworth, as he laved his throbbing temples with water; "I cannot pursue a life so unmeaning; my health must be the forfeit. She was not offended by my manner," he continued, "yet it was a homage unworthy of a delicate woman;—if she found excuse for me, she was, *perhaps*, prepossessed in my favour;" and he retraced his acquaintance with our heroine, with an accuracy which lovers, and only they, will comprehend.

"The old soldier has been waiting above an hour, sir," said Mrs. Millar, as she tapped at the door of Wentworth.

"I will be with him directly," said Sidney; and hastening his toilet, he descended to the breakfast-room. Mrs. Millar introduced the veteran, and withdrew.

There is something in age, when decently clad, however mean the garb, it commands the respect of a thinking, of a *good* mind; the figure and *honourable* clothing of the pensioner was peculiarly calculated to

to inspire respect. Wentworth arose, and placing a chair for the old man, apologized for having made him wait so long, and, by the motion of his head, seemed to inquire the purpose of his visit.

"I can stand, your honour," said the soldier, with an honest smile, which implied that he was proudly conscious of his strength: "and indeed it is my place to do so here," and he bowed.

"I must *command*," said Sidney, with an engaging smile; "I beg you will be seated."

"I am not used to disobey my superiors," said the soldier, taking the offered chair. "Your honour has a servant named Phil Bevans."

"I have; what of him, my good fellow?"

"Why you must know, sir, I have been to Portsmouth to see a poor boy of my own, just ordered on foreign service: well, finding the troops sailed sooner than I expected, I thought I would cross into Sus-

sex and see my sister. I did so, and three days ago I reached East Grinstead, on my way home. I had walked some miles, and hearing that a London coach would go through in the course of an hour, I waited, in hopes of getting an outside birth: that was not to be. I was taking a glass of beer at the inn door, when a loaded stage from London passed through the town; it had just reached the hollow, which is very steep, when off goes one of the wheels, and, in a moment, the coach was upset. I ran, with all the haste I could; many others did the same; we soon got the passengers out; only two were hurt to signify—one was your servant, sir, who had his arm broken, and a sweet little boy, whose face was cut, and one leg sprained."

"Poor fellow," said Sidney, with a lively expression of interest; "go on, my friend; tell me where you left my worthy servant."

"Well, sir, we soon removed them to the inn; but what was my surprise to meet,

in

in one of the inside people, my old comrade, Ned Bevans! yes, sir, Ned was captain Fitzhenry's man, when I served the noble major Durweston."

"Good Heavens!" said Wentworth, "did you know captain Fitzhenry?"

"Know him, your honour! I believe I did! I saw him die; and, worse than that, was forced to be the messenger of bad news to his sweet lady. Poor thing! I shall never forget how calm she looked: some folks might have thought she did not feel it; but I saw how it was, your honour—it went to her heart at once, as I may say. She had a pretty little girl, just beginning to talk at that time: I remember she climbed upon the settee madam was sitting on, and kissing her cheek, said—'Papa will come soon—don't cry, mama.' 'Never!' said the captain's lady, in such a sorrowful way, I think I hear her voice at this moment, your honour."

"No wonder," said Wentworth, leaning thoughtfully upon his hand; "such

scenes will retain their place in the memory."

"They will, sir. Well, but as I was saying, I met Ned Bevans; he's a worthy fellow, and as good a soldier as ever fought for king George, and that's saying enough. I verily believe, sir, we feel more for our kinsfolks than ourselves;—poor Ned was quite a woman when he found his nephew had broke his arm: but the worst was to come—Bevans's daughter was one of the passengers, and had charge of the child that was hurt; the poor girl was distracted; I saw how it was, your honour—Phil was her sweetheart, yet she was quite a hero, as I may say—so active in helping the surgeon that was called in, yet she never lost sight of the child, who, after all, is the greatest sufferer, and, I am apt to think, will not recover. Phil was continually calling upon your name, sir; so I undertook to see you, and explain what had happened, which, I hope, will excuse the poor fellow's absence."

"I am

"I am truly concerned that so serious a cause has detained him," said Sidney. "I will write to the surgeon, and learn if he can be removed with safety. I should be more easy if he was under my own roof, and attended by a friend of my own."

"You speak nobly, sir, and like a soldier," said the animated veteran; "yet excuse me, sir; I am afraid you would do a little harm, by removing him just yet, for you see young master Durweston requires great care, and Phil will walk about and help his cousin."

"Durweston!" said Sidney; "explain, whom do you mean?"

"Why it is extraordinary enough, your honour, the little boy is the grandson of my old master, as I may say; that is, he is the son of Mr. Charles Durweston:—I did not know he was in England, or I would have trudged a hundred miles to see him."

"Where is the child's mother?" asked Sidney, in a faltering voice.

"I did

"I did not ask questions," replied the soldier, "for Bevans seemed shy upon the subject. I am afraid my master's son is not so well off as he deserves to be."

"Have they apprized Mr. Durweston of the accident?" said Wentworth.

"Why I'll tell you, sir, how we managed; Bevans said that his master's aunt must not be told of it suddenly; so, if the child was better, he meant to go on as today, and find some way of telling Mr. Durweston by himself: but I have my doubts about the child—he was very feverish, the night before last, when I left him. I was here at six o'clock yesterday morning—your house was shut up; I waited till the servants were stirring; a surly fellow told me, at nine o'clock, you could not be seen. I marched home to the college, being forced to make my appearance, as my leave was out. Well, back I tramped, and then the woman who opened the door said you were out, but civilly bid me come in the morning. This is all I have to say, your

your honour; and I am sure Phil Bevans has nothing to fear from his master."

"To fear!" said Sidney; "the fear is on my side, my good man. I should be very unhappy if Philip exerted himself too much with his broken arm; and the child too—poor little fellow! Let me see—I could run down in four hours," drawing the bell as he spoke; "I will go, and, if possible, bring them here."

Mrs. Millar appeared. "Can you find a person to order the carriage, with four horses, to come round directly?" said he.

"Certainly, sir," said the comely dame, retiring on her errand.

"You should have been a soldier, your honour," said the veteran, rising.

"Why?" said Sidney, smiling.

"Because you look like a man, and you feel like one too, sir; you have a thought to the sick and wounded, your honour."

"If a man, living at ease, cannot see the necessity of exertion in a case like the pre-

sent,"

sent," said Wentworth, "he is unworthy of the power he possesses."

"That's very just, sir; yet, somehow, people are not much given to go out of their way for their inferiors: to be sure, there was a lord, they called him, came into the inn, driving his own coach and four, just after the accident; it seems he saw the coach go over, and I thought he was behaving very humane: he came into the room, and was giving great orders to the landlord to have every thing proper for the sufferers, when, all of a sudden, poor Phil came out of a swoon, and caught some of his words—'We want none of *your* help,' says he. Little Nancy joined him—'Go out of the room, sir,' says she; 'for if my poor father was to know who you are, it would kill him, I am sure.' I thought his lordship looked foolish; and a gentleman that was with him seemed inclined to be angry; but however, he got the better of it, and went out with my lord. I did

not

not wonder at Phil's words, when I heard that Ned Bevans's eldest girl is kept by this fine buck. I think I could have given him a threshing myself; yet perhaps she is a volunteer—if so——"

"I am afraid she is," said Sidney.

"Well then, your honour, I can't defend her," said the soldier; "there should be no bounty-money equal to the price of a woman's innocence: if there is, I am afraid she will, in time, prove a *deserter*."

"There can be no doubt of it," said Wentworth. "Stop one minute," he added, as the veteran was retiring; "you must be fatigued—go take some refreshment below; and whenever you walk into town, make my house a resting-place;" and putting a small note into the hand of the soldier, he turned from his manly acknowledgments; and arranging a sum sufficient for his immediate necessity, he waited impatiently the arrival of the carriage. A thousand ideas crowded on the mind of our hero: had Philip been the sole

sole sufferer, his own zeal, and the worth of the young man, would have led him to exertion to do him service; it was a point of *duty*, which his principles strictly exacted of him.—"The diligence and activity of our domestics adds sensibly to our comfort," said the reflecting Wentworth, "and shall we desert them, when sickness, and the casualties to which we are in common exposed, overtakes them? Heaven forbid!" said our *Englishman;* "such is not the return I owe MY servant."

It would be an affectation of generosity —of benevolence, to avow that Sidney did not attach to his speculative humanity a stronger interest than friendship. The woman who held him in bondage was indisputably the child of Mrs. Fitzhenry; all idea of her being the wife of Durweston was banished from his mind; she appeared too gentle, too amiable, in short, too much the *woman*, to quit her child, and appear in the world without a mother's sacred appellation; her youth precluded the possibility

bility of such a thing—yet he knew not the *age* of the child. But a more ostensible proof was the character of Durweston, whose manly sentiments, and truly independant mind, made it impossible he would subject the creature of his love, his affianced wife, to bear the contumely of a harsh-judging world.—"No!" said Wentworth; "to suffer *together* is to ameliorate grief; the stronger mind may, and it is natural it should, own the keener wound, in beholding its dearest treasure oppressed by adversity; yet woman can suffer nobly; she is often the prop of weak and desponding man.—The sweet girl, yes, my Amelia has felt the chill blast of poverty: be it mine to guard her future days—to chase from her heart the remembrance of former scenes, and own my happiness in her loved society."

The calculations of our *Englishman*, though evidently extraneous, own some apology in the purity of his intentions. The diversified delineations which *Hope* sketches are

are usually evanescent. I believe the *ground-work* in these portraits of imagination should be soberly tinted, to bear the fancy out. Yet we are all artists, and our vanity, not unfrequently, leads us to think ourselves connoisseurs, where, in truth, we are the simplest of amateurs. To which of these classes our hero pertained, remains to be elucidated. A *little* enthusiasm (as a woman, I venture to aver) is rather a charm than a blemish in the character of man; all *overwrought* feelings tend to make us credulous; we are the liable children of imposition, weaving our own humility at the shrine of prejudice.

The arrival of the chariot broke in upon the musings of Sidney; and as he threw himself into one corner, and gave directions to the postboys, a mingled sensation of expectation and regret stole to his bosom. If the sufferers were able to be removed, his own medical friend would be their best assistant; and, by becoming the protector—the guardian of Durweston's

child,

child, he should retain a hostage of no mean interest; Durweston would forego his reserve; it would bring them together; and then Amelia must certainly be united in the compact. This concatenation appeared so probable, that the heart of our *Englishman* yielded to the pleasing perspective; and he commenced his journey, with all the enthusiasm of a castle-builder.

We must now turn to a terrestrial mansion, the abode of lady Tadcaster. Though Amelia had anticipated that her departure from the ball-room would offend her ladyship, she had not estimated the *quality* of that displeasure justly. It was near twelve o'clock on the ensuing morning, ere her ladyship made her appearance. There is not a more true criterion of *some* women's tempers, than the manner in which they use the bells; an incessant jingling succeeded to her ladyship's descent; the yawning domestics were heard running from room to room, while their murmurs, had they been audible, expressed any thing than

than zeal for her service. Our heroine was induced to believe some extraordinary circumstance occasioned the bustle she heard. Lady Maria entered the apartment of Amelia.—"My dear Miss Sidney," said the timid intercessor, "my aunt wishes to speak with you: she is rather hasty in her disposition," she added; "pray do not take offence at anything she may say."

"I hope lady Tadcaster will give me no reason to cause you uneasiness," said Amelia; "I am not conscious of deserving her displeasure."

"I am sure you do not, my dear Miss Sidney; but you know when people are vexed, they often say what they do not mean."

"There are such people, no doubt," replied Amelia; "but I can see no necessity why we are to increase their foible, by submitting to their unjust censures."

"Will you go now?" resumed lady Maria; "I was sent to bring you to the drawing-room."

"Certainly,"

"Certainly," replied Amelia, taking the offered hand of her fair friend.

"Pray, ma'am," said lady Tadcaster, as our heroine entered the room, "why did you quit the ball-room till your pupils retired?"

"I did not consider that my presence was necessary, ma'am; the young ladies were entirely removed from my observation; and indeed I was too much fatigued to remain any longer."

"*Your* fatigue is out of the question—it was my pleasure you should remain. I never was so astonished, as to find you had the temerity to go out without apprizing me."

"My fault, if it *is* one, does not deserve the term your ladyship is pleased to use. In all matters which relate to my occupation in your ladyship's family, I trust you have found me uniformly attentive: I was not engaged to go into society with the ladies Dalton; as such, I must think your ladyship has misconstrued my conduct."

"You

"You are eminently correct, ma'am," said lady Tadcaster, with a sneer; "but will you have the goodness to explain how you managed to be so familiar, so much at ease with *my* friend, Mr. Wentworth?—you never *said* you knew him; pray explain this item?"

"Your ladyship is not in the habit of inquiring whom I know; had you asked me the question, I could have no hesitation in saying, I have known Mr. Wentworth some time."

"Indeed! well, this is information! I had no idea of it: he is excessively odd, therefore your vanity need not be raised by his casual gallantries; he always selects some opportunity of making himself conspicuous."

"If I had been so *unfortunate* as to own the weakness your ladyship has named, I certainly could not *retain* it, after your elucidation. I am not a *conspicuous* person; I should blush to own the charge, though the situation in which I was placed last

last night might, in a degree, sanction your severity."

"Severity! really, Miss Sidney, this is language I did not expect—I am not used to be answered."

"Nor I to be arraigned, madam."

"What did you expect? were the company to do you homage? Upon my word, I believe Tibbits is right—there is much inconvenience in giving refuge to female dependants."

"Your ladyship is at liberty to avail yourself of my services; I am perfectly prepared to withdraw myself. I feel that I did not intrude myself into your family, and can retire from it, satisfied with my own principles."

"This is a very imperious mode of conduct, Miss Sidney—highly unbecoming: have not I shewn you every consideration? treated you like my nieces? in fact, made you quite my equal?"

"Admitting that your ladyship had done

done *all* you say, the consideration would lose its influence from the present moment."

"What high-flown-notions! absolutely I doubt your sanity, child; this is the very hyperbole of romance—quite above our sphere."

"I presume to think differently, madam; and in the full possession of my faculties, I acquaint you with my resolution to quit your family, as soon as convenient."

"Directly!" said lady Tadcaster; "it cannot be too soon."

Amelia was retiring, when lady Maria caught her arm.—"My dear aunt, Miss Sidney must not go," said the artless pleader; "we are so happy together—indeed I love her like a sister!"

"My sweet girl," said Amelia, overpowered by the tenderness of her advocate, "no time or distance can make me forget your amiable kindness: I could not remain with lady Tadcaster—she considers

me

me as an object of contempt; I think I may attain a more flattering distinction, and the hope is my consolation."

"Maria," said her ladyship, with an authoritative voice, "let me have no whims —leave the room, child—you are a credulous silly girl."

Lady Charlotte, who was filling some invitation cards at a writing-table, was not so intent upon her employment as to be inattentive to the passing scene.—"Shall I address one to Wentworth?" asked the fashionable scribe.

"No—yes," said lady Tadcaster; "I will have the pleasure of quizzing the affected moralist."

An unfortunate smile rose upon the lip of our heroine; it seemed to imply a doubt of her ladyship's power in this particular.

"I am the most unfortunate woman in existence!" resumed the enraged lady Tadcaster. "The *tenderness* of my feelings leads me into dilemmas which absolutely

unnerve me. Your calmness, Miss Sidney, is affected; I despise the disposition which can so readily assume indifference, and am most happy I have so soon made out your character."

"Your ladyship will ever remain a stranger to my character," replied Amelia. "With regard to my calmness, I should be sorry to degrade *myself*, by forgetting what is due to your ladyship." And curtseying with a respectful demeanour, she withdrew.

All the misery of her friendless estate rushed on the mind of our heroine; the Hopkinses were her only refuge; and, with a heart bowed down by contending emotions, she addressed a short note to Miss Hopkins, intimating her intention of going to Friday-street in the evening. She had closed the paper, and was descending to seek a way of attaining a messenger to convey it, when a footman presented a letter to her. She tore the seal, and, with an agitation

agitation to which no language could do justice, read as follows.

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"MADAM,

"THOUGH I have been so unfortunate as to fall under your displeasure, I cannot resist informing you, that your little favourite, the son of Mr. Durweston, lies ill and wounded, at the —— inn, East Grinstead. The accident under which he suffers was occasioned by the overturning of a stage in which he was a passenger. Chance brought lord Osterly and myself to the scene of distress; his amiable and benevolent mind was on this, as on every laudable occasion, strongly impelled to give all possible aid; his services were rejected, from a false and very mistaken idea, which I forbear to name. I am not *exactly* acquainted with the *nature* of *your* interest in this *child*, but judging from the amiable sensibility so evident in your manner, that a knowledge of this fact would be advan-

tageous to the little sufferer, I presumed to submit it to your consideration; and am, madam, with perfect respect,

Your obedient servant,

JONATHAN SUPPLE."

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Though the medium by which this intimation was given was one which our heroine might doubt, yet the journey of the child lay in that direction;—it is true, some days had elapsed since his departure—yet might not *this* account for the silence of Carberry? Her heart took the alarm. The ambiguous allusion of Supple respecting her connexion with the little Charles gave her no concern, her own integrity baffling the inuendoes of the artful hypocrite. The respectful terms in which his note was couched were suspicious: it is true, his manner on the preceding evening was perfectly distinct from his former conduct: she knew lord Osterly to be the man with whom the wretched Maria Bevans resided, yet she felt

felt as a woman of delicacy should feel in such a case; however strongly her feelings were interested in the reformation of this child of error, *she* could not broach the subject; it would give the libertine an opportunity of communication which *her* principles taught her to avoid; and while she half-doubted the communication of Supple, her ardent mind was suggesting an immediate plan of action. Destroying the note she had written to Miss Hopkins, the courageous dependant resolved upon going to Friday-street instantly, from whence she could dispatch a line to Carberry, and claim his protection in the journey she intended to undertake—"I will go to the dear little fellow, and remain with him until he is able to be removed," said the anxious Amelia, "and then we will go together. I think I can never more live separate from my beloved Mrs. Manderson: my pencil shall be employed; I will, if health is given me, exert myself incessantly; and when my relation shall claim me, oh! then I will tell

him all I owe this more than mother! I shall live to requite her," said the child of Hope, "I feel I shall;" and ordering a hack to be ready as soon as possible, she once more packed her humble wardrobe. Her appointment with lady Beverly rose on her mind; taking her pen, she apologized for the seeming rudeness of her conduct—stated the cause as imperious—and expressed her grateful sense of the kindness of her ladyship. A hurried and almost imperfect pang of regret stole to her bosom, as she reflected that, in this involuntary disappointment, she was repelling a friendship which owned the most delightful promise. The parting words of Wentworth were not forgotten; there was something in them highly flattering, nay, soothing to her feelings; yet she dared not trust herself to give them all the import their first utterance had conveyed to her heart; and almost ashamed of having suffered them to recur at the *present* moment, she closed her note, and descending to the hall, gave it in

charge

charge of a servant, as she passed to the vehicle which awaited her reception.

It was nearly one o'clock when she arrived at Mr. Hopkins's; to the comfort of Amelia, Mrs. Hopkins was from home; the sisters received her with affectionate warmth, which was only damped by her avowal of quitting them, the instant Mr. Carberry could arrange for her departure. The hour we have recorded is one of peculiar bustle with the mercantile world. Amelia dispatched a messenger to the counting-house of Mr. Carberry: two, three, four o'clock arrived, and no answer was returned; her impatience increased as the moments fled. At length the elder Mr. Carberry made his appearance, and with a manner the most friendly, offered his attendance, in place of his nephew.

"Henry is confined to his room for a few days, my dear young lady," said the worthy Carberry; "I had given orders to his servant to withhold all letters from him; your note was presented to him by

myself, a few minutes since; he would have broken through the restrictions imposed upon him, had I not opposed him. He, at my request, imparted the purport of your favour; and if you will accept of an old fellow for a companion in the place of a young one, I shall have much pleasure in being your attendant."

"I am truly concerned for the cause which throws me so much on your generosity, sir," replied Amelia; "yet I must confess myself grateful, and ready to avail myself of your offer."

"I hoped as much," said the merchant. "We will wave the word gratitude. I would rather *you* had allowed *me* to owe you gratitude;—but that was not to be, as poor Henry has told me. My carriage waits—have you much preparation to make?"

"I am ready," said Amelia, taking a small parcel she had arranged. "I would not lose a moment.—You shall hear from me, my dear Miss Hopkins; I can never forget your hospitality: remember me to your

father;"

father;" and hastening after Mr. Carberry, she was seated, and had begun her journey, ere the good-natured sisters could catch a glimpse of her.

When Molineux, or Belcher, or any other of those *protegés* of our *nobility* are to fight, one does not wonder at meeting the carriages of one's acquaintance on the appointed road; we know what collects a *mob*, and how necessary the *dicky* of a *distinguished* equipage is for the conveyance of the *victor* to town; many may start in the hope of attaining an *honour* so desirable: but on the road to East Grinstead, though we know it to be *one* way of going to Brighton, it surprised Mr. Carberry to meet two or three equipages belonging to persons whom he believed to be in London, yet they were posting *to* the metropolis. The travellers had proceeded fifteen miles on their way, when the carriage of lord Osterly, with four sorry post-horses, passed them on its way to London.

"There goes one of our most dashing

bucks," said the merchant; "a thoughtless and improvident young man. You know lord Osterly, Miss Sidney?"

"I have seen him frequently, sir—what fatigue these young men undergo! he was at lady Tadcaster's ball as late as six o'clock this morning: a life of dissipation must be most injurious to the constitution."

"It must, and it should be; were health indestructible, very fashionable people would remain strangers to reflection;—yet I saw a very sober-minded fellow pass us about an hour since—one who, I dare say, was of lady Tadcaster's party likewise, Mr. Sidney Wentworth."

"Did he pass?" said Amelia, starting, and raising the flap which shaded the back glass.

"An hour ago he did," said the merchant, smiling; "you know him, I perceive."

"Yes, sir; he was at lady Tadcaster's—I have known him some time," and she hesitated.

"He

"He is a worthy young man, Miss Sidney; no woman need blush at owning a friendship for Mr. Wentworth. If you had not said he was at a party last night, I should have imagined he was an invalid, the carriage moved so leisurely."

"Perhaps he is ill," said Amelia, with earnestness; "he did not look in health last night."

"Why I think we may feel secure that he is so," said Mr. Carberry; "for there could be no necessity, as I should imagine, for his taking a journey, if he was not equal to it."

"Very true, sir," replied our heroine, blushing for the interest and accuracy with which she had expressed herself. "It will be dark before we arrive, I am afraid—have we much farther to go?"

"About ten miles. Make yourself easy, my good young lady—children are petulant, but, in general very able sufferers;—it is almost miraculous to witness what they will undergo."

Amelia could not be comforted by the well-meant remarks of her companion, and, in fact, an additional pang was preying upon her spirits; she could not regret the step she had taken, yet the low state of her finances made her tremble, lest any immediate claim should be made upon her. If she could be permitted to watch over the child she loved so well, until Durweston could join her, all the purpose of her heart would be answered. It was with these depressing feelings, our heroine entered the inn at East Grinstead; before Mr. Carberry could make the necessary inquiries, Amelia had questioned the host, who welcomed their entrance.

"They left my house at four o'clock, madam," said the landlord; "the young man's master came in his own carriage, and took them away."

"What, both! did the child go?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Where is the old man, and the child's nurse?" asked Amelia.

"The

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASW

"The girl went with the child, madam; and the old man went on by a stage about an hour since."

"How unfortunate!" said Amelia. "Can you tell me what the gentleman's name was who took them away?"

"Mr. Wentworth, of Park-street, London, is the gentleman," said the landlord; "he left his name on this card, madam," presenting one. "You need not be afraid but he will take care of them, ma'am, so don't frighten yourself; he seems a very worthy gentleman."

Not a word passed the lips of Amelia; a tremor seized her frame; and had not the kind merchant supported her, she must have fallen to the ground.

"I am very weak, my dear sir," said the reviving girl; "but indeed the surprise I have met is so extraordinary. Pray call the man in, and question him further—I am not equal to it."

Mr. Carberry summoned the landlord, and

and at each reply of the honest penegyrist, her agitation increased.

"Why, sir, it appears that the young man has been in the service of this good young gentleman above four years;—well, when he heard of his accident, he comes off to see what could be done for him; luckily the lad is mending: but I should tell you that Mr. Wentworth is a friend of the little fellow's father—and so indeed he must be; for I heard him say to the old man, when he was giving him directions what to do, that Mr. Durweston was his intimate friend, and that he would be quite satisfied with what he had done; for the old man did not much like to part with them at first; but the young girl, the nurse, soon brought her father to agree to it; and, indeed, they seem to have been indebted to Mr. Wentworth's goodness before now. 'Tis all for the best, as I said to my mistress—they are in good hands now; and I have no doubt but we shall have Mr.

Durweston

Durweston here in the course of to-morrow."

"I did not know Durweston was acquainted with Mr. Wentworth," said Carberry to Amelia.

"Nor did I, sir; I certainly have heard Philip's master spoken of in the handsomest terms, though I never heard his name."

"And now you have heard it, I am persuaded you give credit to all that has been said, Miss Sidney."

"It would be impossible to deny applause to an act so liberal—so generous," said Amelia; "I trust they were fit to be removed?"

"Quite so, Miss, quite so," said mine host; "the young man does not complain to signify; the child's foot is weak, but he will do well, there's no fear."

"We must be your inmates to-night," said Mr. Carberry, as he dismissed the landlord: "be sure and attend to all passengers who pass; and should Mr. Durweston arrive, detain him."

"I should not know the gentleman from Adam,"

Adam," replied the host, "but I will bid Tom ostler ask the drivers who stop here, sir."

"That will do," said Carberry, as the landlord withdrew.

Amelia was silent—her heart was too full for utterance. The nature of Wentworth's acquaintance with Durweston was an enigma to her—the extent of his zeal astonished her; there was no trait of amiability which she could not readily apply to our hero;—yet it was wonderful to think how their interest was blended; memory helped her to a few favourable recollections, as relating to his attentions to herself; but not all the bright visions which her fancy suggested could lead her to unite this last act with any immediate reference to *her* feelings; and while she marked the *distinctness*, she added a new excellence to the character of Wentworth—"He is a stranger to the pride of situation," said the fair enthusiast; "he is a master without a master's arrogance. Compassion for his servant first prompted his journey; and when he found

he

he could be more extensively serviceable, he embraced the happy power—how amiable!" said the unconscious moralizer.

"You are right," said Mr. Carberry; "I know few young men like Mr. Wentworth. Do not revoke an approbation it would be blindness to deny. I, among others, was deceived into an opinion of his being the professed admirer of Mrs. Marnley; I am now undeceived, and I rejoice in it; she is not a woman in the least suited to his disposition, though she is certainly a very lovely woman."

"It has been generally thought so, sir; yet I, who saw them together, never entertained such an idea. I think, with you, Mrs. Marnley is handsome."

"Yes, yes, as far as mere beauty, she is very superior; but since Henry has made me acquainted with her mind, I am an apostate to her charms. A woman is only lastingly lovely where her *mind* embellishes her features; we may be *transiently* deceived, but the mask will fall; and happy

is

is it when the *farce* is a short one; an infatuated lover is often hoodwinked; and the *farce* becomes a deplorable tragedy. It is quite an escape, when a man looks back, in some cases;" and rising as he spoke, the mature lover paced the room, with a manner which betrayed that *he* owned himself a clear-sighted lover.

Our heroine retired at an early hour, and as she poured forth her gratitude for the protection afforded to the motherless Charles, her heart, which had been religiously tutored to adore the great " first cause," that heart took an immediate and not indefinite view of *effects*. She hallowed that infinite mercy and providence which gave the innate principles of virtue to man. She rejoiced to perceive, in the mean image of an Omnipotent Deity, those fair emblems of duty, which were devised for his eternal happiness.—" How simple is the life of a good man!" said the prostrate Amelia; " and though his deeds are secret, his master, who sees him in secret, he

he shall reward him openly." The tear of gratitude coursed down her cheeks as she arose; perhaps a sigh followed—what then? suppose we place it to its just account, and say that *love* produced this effect? is it a crime to love virtue—to cherish, in this life, that love of excellence which shall preclude our falling into the habits of the vicious—attenuate the meaning to the softest definition it will bear—call it the *love* of *woman* for *man?* it is not an error, but a virtue: while singleness of *preference* animates her zeal—while purity of mind and manner influences her conduct, happy is he who creates the generous emanation, and, in the *constancy* and love of a virtuous woman, owns her price to be above 'rubies or gold."

The morning was far advanced ere the travellers met at breakfast. Our heroine had felt tenacious of hurrying her companion; she had watched the carriages from her chamber-window, with anxious gaze: the distance from Grinstead to Westbourne

was

was too considerable to give her a hope of Durweston's arrival at so early an hour, yet the restlessness of suspense made it impossible she should weigh probabilities accurately. Many were the palpitations she experienced, as she caught the profile of the passing traveller. The church clock had chimed eleven, when, to her surprise, Mr. Carberry, in company with a gentleman, crossed the road, and entered the inn; in a few minutes, she was summoned to breakfast; and, in the stranger, met the surgeon who had attended the sufferers.

"Here is comfort for you, Miss Sidney," said the benevolent merchant; "this gentleman assures me the little boy is in no immediate danger—his foot is nearly well; the contusion on his temple is not a serious one; thus, I trust, Mr. Wentworth's nursery will soon be convalescent."

"And the young man?" said Amelia; "I hope he will not be endangered by removal?"

"Not in the least, madam," said the surgeon.

geon. "I had a conference with the gentleman, his master, I believe; had I seen any necessity for their detention, I should have stated my objections."

"Thank God!" said our heroine; "I wish poor Durweston knew as much."

"We will not quit this until towards evening," resumed Carberry; "five hours is sufficient for our journey. If Durweston goes to London, we shall most probably see him before that time—he can, in that case, join us."

"You are very good—very considerate," replied the tearful Amelia; "this is exactly my wish."

"I am a very fortunate fellow," said the good Carberry; "let me tell you, my young friend, there is something consoling to my vanity, in discovering that sixty can think like sixteen."

"Not quite so juvenile, my dear sir," she replied, with a faint smile; "yet I hope there is nothing new in the *grateful* and the *benevolent* owning similar feelings."

"Do

"Do make the tea, child; and in future pray expunge that ugly word from your vocabulary."

The doctor withdrew; and Amelia, on whom kindness acted with an influence too powerful to be restrained, sat silent and oppressed by her feelings.

"You women are imperious arbiters," said the merchant, looking anxiously towards Amelia; "your frowns plunge us into despair, your smiles bear a varied interpretation, but your tears—my good girl, if you have any compassion for me, dismiss those emblems of sorrow;—despair, in one so innocent and deserving of happiness, is almost criminal; your days of joy are to come; you will be happy—you shall be happy, if I have the power to make you so!" and hastening out of the room, to hide the very sensibility he had arraigned, he left Amelia to appreciate the value of his generous friendship.

"Happy!" sighed the forlorn orphan; "I, who have not a home to shelter me, who

who must again become the child of bounty, and sue for protection where I have already drawn so largely ;" and, in the energy of her sorrow, she deprecated the tardiness of colonel Fitzhenry ; he had been apprized of her forlorn situation ; it is true, he had held out the most magnificent promises of adoption—had expressed the liveliest satisfaction in having a claimant so worthy of his protection : " but the intermediate time," sighed Amelia ; " he has made no provision for the days, months, nay years, that have elapsed since he was apprized of my existence. Dare I rely on promises so remote ? will they ever be accomplished ?"

Though distrust is an unamiable feature to pourtray, it is impossible to deny, that, in the present case, it was not a natural feeling. The children of adversity take views of human nature, which the independant rarely comprehend.—" Adversity teaches ;" alas ! what nerve-destroying lessons are taught in the school of sorrow !

"Hopes deferred!"—grief, by accustomed association, not unfrequently anticipated; those shocks of the heart which irremediable distress inflict; the humiliations of a delicate mind, opposed to unfeeling ignorance;—if such acute appeals are strewed in the path of the intellectual woman, she may bear them with fortitude, with the calmness of a consistent Christian; yet her *terrestrial* views will be shadowed. The sunshine of prosperity mocks her grasp—she looks not to the morrow, or its sister emblems—*her* hopes are beyond this sphere—and though youth bloom on her cheek, she heeds not the perishable grace, but anxiously looks to that harbour "where the weary are at rest."

"Out of nature! ridiculous! affected sensibility!" says the female reader, if a fashionable woman. "One never hears of such things; how can people suffer such difficulties without its being known?"

If it is *known*, it is no longer the sorrow I have attempted to depict: coarse minds are

are eloquent in distress—their sorrows may be stemmed. It is far different with the retired victim of grief. Did you never see an eye that spoke to your heart? a manner that wooed your confidence?—tush! I am speaking to the women who have *eyes*, yet are *blind*, and *hearts*, that are devoted to any thing than feminine sympathy. Your names are blazoned in the public prints—*entre nous*, ye are *public* characters; you can *contribute patriotically*, it is *known*, and ye are *dubbed* patronesses, &c. but the *private* registry—the account between you and an hereafter, it is a miniature duodecimo, "all titlepage and no contents." There are exceptions amongst your equals—would that the better were the greater proportion!

Returning to the parlour of our obscure inn, we must relate that the day was advancing, and our travellers had taken the usual way of passing time in similar situations, viz. they had strolled through the town, walked round the church, &c. &c.

 when

when perceiving a post-chaise drive up to the inn, they hastened across the road to recognise the passengers.

"It is Edward!" said Amelia, dropping the arm of Mr. Carberry, and darting towards Durweston as he stepped from the chaise.

"Amelia!" said the astonished Durweston. "Good Heavens, my dear girl, why are you here, and alone?"

"Charles is safe," said the anxious Amelia. "See, here is Mr. Carberry."

The merchant took the arm of his nominal clerk—"Come," said he, "let us endeavour to be composed," and he led the way to the parlour, and in a few words related the object of his journey, with the circumstances which had rendered it useless. —"We will now proceed to London; my carriage is here," continued Carberry. "You can see your boy to-night; therefore I expect you will not suffer yourself to be unnecessarily depressed."

"I must go directly," said Durweston; "I shall

"I shall not know a moment of ease, until I see my child."

Carberry ordered the carriage to be made ready immediately; in his absence, Durweston sought of our heroine the particulars of her situation; his sympathizing nature was sensibly affected by the chequered fate of his orphan friend.

"You must proceed to Westbourne, my dear Amelia," said the collected Edward; "my aunt languishes for your society—nay, she was wounded by your acceptance of your recent asylum. Have you any fears? would you object to making this journey alone? I confess myself too much interested in the fate of my boy to be your escort."

Amelia assured him of her willingness to comply with his wishes.—"I am going to a home," said she, emphatically; "there are few personal inconveniences from which I should shrink, with such a consolation in view."

The return of the merchant prevented further

further communication. Durweston explained their plan.

"I must be allowed my way," said Mr. Carberry; "Miss Sidney shall use the carriage; we will take a chaise. Durweston could not refuse an offer so consonant to his feelings.

"Amelia," said the grateful Edward, "you have always esteemed my friends; in Mr. Carberry you behold the most generous and disinterested of men—one who, by his liberality, has made dependance respectable."

"I want no recommendation in this instance," replied our heroine; "I trust Mr. Carberry, in his benevolent disposition, owns that satisfaction which those he obliges have not the power to express."

The carriage was announced. Taking leave of the good merchant, Amelia was led to the chariot by Durweston, who, in his parting adieu, placed a small note in her hand, and, with a benediction fervent as sincere, the orphans parted.

The merchant and his *elève* were, in a few minutes, the occupants of a chaise, which, with encouraging hints to the drivers, proceeded towards the metropolis with incredible speed.

END OF VOL. IV.

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